

Burlington Junior School
Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday 19th March 2025

Governing Body (14)

Co-opted Governors

Stephen Arbuthnot (Chair)
Stefan Bown (Vice Chair)
Rebecca Campbell (Safeguarding & H&S)
Simon Gimour (PPG)
Mariam Hakim
Julie Hickman (SEN/LA/PTA)
Naveed Shah
Matt West (Staff)

LA Governor

Vacant

Parent Governors

Mariam Uteem (SEN)
Sarah Finch (PPG)

Staff Governor

Jemima Harris

Ex-Officio

Pip Utting (Headteacher)

Associate Governor

Pam Hall (Staff)
Chloe Albury (Staff)

In attendance was Mr Blow, Deputy Headteacher (DHT)

The Clerk was Miss Aniq Mir

1. Apologies

Mrs Hakim and Mr Shah - apologies received and accepted by the board

2. Declaration of Business Interests

No business interests were declared.

3. Non-Governor Participants/Observers

Mr Blow, Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) and Mrs Ikotu (parent observer) were present.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the governing board meeting held on 29 January 2025 were approved.

5. Any urgent matters

No urgent matters were declared

6. New Build update by Robert Shankland

A presentation on the new build was delivered by Robert Shankland (RS) representing RBK/Pick Everard.

Governors asked what the long-term plan is for the posts in the walkway by Year 6 entrance. RS reported that the contractor and planning advisors are working on a suitable plan for this. It may be that with the school's agreement it will be left as it is with a view to remove it at a later stage.

Governors raised concerns about the disruption the noise may cause during SATS week in May? The HT reported that Morgan Sindall is aware of the SATS week, and it has been agreed that work that may cause any disturbance will not be carried out while children are taking the tests.

Governors asked where the new cycle/scooter racks will be in the new build? RS reported that a significant number of cycle racks are to be placed to the south of the canopy, just in front of the green containers and planting. Further racks are incorporated into the next phase of contract work and will be ready as per the current programme in September 2025.

Governors asked if the small entrance gate by The Bridge will still allow access next term? Morgan Sindall's response to this is that the gate currently sits in Morgan Sindall's site. Once we have completed the new build - it was always due to be our pedestrian entrance to the site. After the last-minute alterations to the accommodation position following UKPN's emergency works, we have since considered that this would be a preferable entrance for Infant/Nursery parents avoiding the need for them to walk through the junior school side at all. Chris is currently working up some drawings to run through this with Rob, but we believe this benefits the junior school too.

Governors asked if the Infants are running any Easter holiday clubs and if so, are they fully aware of how to access the site? Morgan Sindall confirmed that the Infants school will be notified of the access map prior to the end of term.

Governors raised concerns about the unsociable behaviour in the park, especially after dark and asked if there will be any security cameras and additional lighting near the new entrance? Morgan Sindall confirmed that there is a lamp post next to the pedestrian entrance from the park and there is also CCTV which covers the pedestrian gate entrance

7. Follow-ups from last meeting

- (1) HT to notify Governors of next curriculum learning walks - week beginning 2nd June
- (2) Clerk to find out about the update DBS service costs by June Governor meeting

8. Safeguarding

The HT went through the safeguarding concerns linked to the new build. The HT confirmed that the classroom on the bridge will have surrounding walls built at a height to ensure the safety of the children. The children will not have access to the new roof garden until it is made fully secure.

Governors raised concerns about the new mixed toilet facilities and asked how this will be managed? The HT confirmed that toilets will be split in half with a boy's end and a girl's end. There will also be one reserved disabled cubicle which can be used by any child who doesn't want to use the mixed Facility or for staff in an emergency.

Governors asked if staff using the disabled cubicle was a safeguarding concern? The HT reported that this concern has been noted, and staff will be encouraged to use the toilets on the ground floor.

However, it is recognised that staff use the toilets nearest to their classes throughout the day and in this case it may be that we will have to look at ways to add an additional door to separate the disabled cubicle from the main toilet area.

Governors asked how often the pupil toilets are checked during the day? The HT reported that staff don't go into the children's toilets unless an alarm has been raised of a missing child. In practice staff mostly call out from outside to check if everything is ok. This process is followed to safeguard all staff against accusations.

The HT reported on the rise of online safety concerns and the impact this is having on children's behaviours.

Governors recognised this area of concern and acknowledge that there is a rise in parents taking complaints directly to the Local Authority or Ofsted instead of the school in the first instance.

9. Governor training

Governors reported back on the SEN training programme which they attended. They praised the school for the SEN provision. The ADHD children are currently reported under the SEMH category however, the local authority is working on implementing a new independent category to improve how the statistics are shown.

Governors asked if the schools SEND information on the school website is audited? The HT reported that this is currently not the case however she suggested that the SIP could deep dive into this area during any future visit.

The HT spoke about the importance of governors attending relevant training, and encouraged the board to undertake any training necessary for their governor link role, particularly refresher training after 3 years.

9. Matters arising

(i) New governor approval

The clerk invited the board to approve a new governor application made by Mrs Kita Ikoku who had observed at the last meeting.

The chair raised a motion for approval, and this was seconded by Mrs Sarah Finch.

(ii) Board reshuffle

In previous meetings the Local Authority vacancy had been discussed, and Mrs Jule Hickman had expressed an interest in taking on this role. The clerk explained that the appointment of this role is handled by the AFC governor support team and agreed to share the application process with Mrs Hickman. Once the application has been considered the board will vote and approve the application.

(iii) Technology use amongst children

The HT confirmed that following the growing concerns raised by parents at parent forums the school will be making changes in the use of smartphones amongst children while attending school. These changes will come in effect from September 2025 and details will be shared with parents in due course.

The DHT spoke about the growing use of phones and other devices amongst children and the impact

it has on overall mental wellbeing. He reported that it is recognised in the education sector and steps are being taken in the hope to improve the situation.

Governors asked if parents will also be asked to respect this rule? The HT reported that this will not be the case however if a parent is seen to misuse their device i.e photographing children then they will politely be asked to stop.

10. Heads report

The HT went through the report.

Governors asked how families with language barriers are being supported by the school? The HT reported that the school uses interpreters when needed.

Governors recognised the changes in the demographic statistics of the school and the HT agreed. However, the way that the current application form is designed does not capture all the data correctly and ways to improve this are being explored.

The HT highlighted that there have been a growing number of views on the possibility of banning smartphones from September 2025. The school currently prohibits the use of phones during the school day and children are required to hand their phones in to their class teacher at 8.50am. The HT acknowledged the concerns parents have on the ban as the phones are seen as a safety tool by parents and the possible challenges the school will face enforcing it. The HT spoke about the growing concerns of misuse and the behaviour challenges schools face with an increase in mental health concerns and ADHD. The HT suggested the possibility of new legislation in the future to tackle these issues however, in the meantime, schools are taking steps to ban smartphones in schools for pupils

Governors asked about the use of smartwatches and what will happen at school events where parents use their phones to record. The HT reported that this has not been decided and suggested the possible use of school iPad to record an event and upload it on a Google classroom or creating a side area in the hall for parents who wish to record.

SIP Report

The HT reported that the new school SIP Chris Chen visits the school at least once a term and focuses on different areas of the curriculum. She meets with subject leads and SLT to work on strengthening the curriculum.

Governors asked how often the school gets a new SIP? The HT confirmed it is not too often and that the last SIP worked with the school for 7 years.

Governors asked if the staff absence insurance covers the staff off as well as the cover? The HT confirmed that the insurance only pays for the replacement cover. The staff member off unwell will receive their contractual sickness absence pay.

11. Policy approvals

The HT reminded the board to approve policies through the governor hub portal.

12. Resource Committee

The vice chair reported that the school business manager uses the school's value standards checklist as guidance to meet the required standards. Once this has been completed it is signed off by the Chair of the resources committee.

13. Curriculum Committee

Next meeting is scheduled on the 04th of June at 7.00 pm.

14. Governor Visit

Governor weeks are due in the weeks commencing:
02nd June 2025 but any Governor is very welcome to tour the new build before then

Governors raised that it would be helpful if in future a report to summarise the visits could be added to the governor hub. The clerk to action this - link or visiting Governors need to send a summary of their visit to the clerk for her to upload onto the portal.

15. What impact are Governors having

The HT acknowledged the support received from the governors over the last few months with the new build walks. The HT thanked the board for the support with the pupil voice, health & safety audit and the school visits to oversee the overall functioning of the school.

16. Equality issues and issues raised by parents

No matters were raised.

17. Staff Recognition

The HT is to send recommendations to the chair of board.

18 Agenda items for future Governing Board meeting

Changes to some policies and governor code of conduct.
Governors to act as mediators at meetings with parents, due to pupil poor attendance, if required.

19. To be actioned

Clerk to add governor visit reports to governor hub.

Clerk to find out about the update DBS service costs by June Governor meeting

Dates of next FGB meeting

Wednesday 18th June 2025

Governing Board Constitution

| | First appointed | Term from | Term until |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Stephen Arbuthnot | 20.11.2019 | 26.09.2023 | 25.09.2027 |
| Stefan Bown | 02.05.2019 | 02.05.2023 | 02.05.2027 |
| Rebecca Campbell | 28.09.2022 | 28.09.2022 | 27.09.2026 |
| Simon Gilmour | 21.11.2018 | 21.11.2022 | 21.11.2026 |
| Mariam Hakim | 27.09.2022 | 27.09.2022 | 26.09.2026 |
| Julie Hickman | 25.10.2019 | 21.06.2023 | 20.06.2027 |
| Kita Ikoku | 19.03.2025 | 19.03.2025 | 18.03.2029 |
| Naveed Shah | 28.09.2022 | 28.09.2022 | 27.09.2026 |
| Sarah Finch | 21.06.2023 | 22.11.2023 | 21.11.2027 |
| Mariam Uteem | 31.01.2024 | 31.01.2023 | 30.01.2027 |
| Matt West | 29.09.2021 | 29.09.2021 | 28.09.2025 |
| Jemima Harris | 22.03.2023 | 22.03.2027 | 22.03.2027 |