

Burlington Junior School
Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday 29th January 2025

Governing Body (14)

Co-opted Governors

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

LA Governor

Vacant

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 Aniq Mir

1. Apologies

Mrs Campbell, Mrs Hakim and Mrs Hall - 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 Miss Albury (class teacher) and Mrs Ikotu (parent observer) were present.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the governing board meeting held on 20 November 2024 were approved.

5. Any urgent matters

No urgent matters were declared

6. Follow-up from last meeting

(1) Add 5 hands rule to governor survey - This has been actioned

(2) HT to report back on how vulnerable families are classified as a group? Vulnerable families are mostly classified as - EHCP, Local Authority, Service, traveller, SEND, EAL, medical

(3) HT to report back on how many absence fines have been given in the last 2 years. 14

(4) HT to look at where ADHD data can be included in the heads report ADHD comes under SEMH as a category. Autism has its own category. Some children have both ASD & ADHD.

(5) HT to look at how staff Governors can attend the resource meetings - all can from 8am, we can arrange one to be covered after 8.45 if there is no staff absence.

(6) SBM to ask Satswana for advice on how to deal with repeat requests - The HT reported that the school can refuse "repeat requests, especially if they become vexatious (manifestly unfounded and excessive)

(7) SBM to report back on who is allowed to request SAR? The HT confirmed that any child can request SAR.

(8) HT to include managing difficult situations between school and parents at the next parent forum. The HT confirmed that this will be included at the next parent forum on the 07th February.

(9) Clerk to find out how Miss Albury can become associate governor?

The decision to appoint Associate Members rests with the FGB and they can be appointed between 1 and 4 years. This should be done at an FGB meeting. There is no limit to the number of Associate Members the board can appoint as they are not part of the constitution.

Associate members are appointed by the governing body to serve on one or more governing body committees. They may also attend full governing body meetings. They are not governors and therefore do not have a vote in governing body decisions, but may be given a vote on decisions made by committees to which they are appointed. Associate members should be appointed because of the specific expertise and experience they can contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. Subject to the disqualifications set out in the 2012 Constitution Regulations, the governing body may appoint a pupil, school staff member, or any other person as an associate member so that they can contribute their specific expertise. This can help to address specific gaps identified in the skills of governing body members, and/or help the governing body respond to particular challenges that they may be facing.

Governors asked what pattern the school observed for term time holidays and if there were repeat offenders? - The HT reported that the school does experience term time absences and are familiar with the patterns. The office staff are experienced and skilfully use a well prepared line of questioning to recognise genuine absences due to a child's illness vs absences due to travel. The HT explained that the school recognises that absence levels are higher just before and after the school holiday periods. The school is required to report absences above 5 continuous days to the local authority and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will then look at each individual case and issue a fine if necessary. The HT

explained the different excuses families use to avoid these fines and the steps the school takes including home visits to ensure that the absence is genuine and that ultimately the child is safe.

Governors asked if attendance levels are part of OFSTED? The HT confirmed that this has always been the case.

Governors asked if details of internal emails can be requested as part of the Subject Access Request (SAR) and how does the school ensure everything is provided? The DHT confirmed that all data including emails can be requested and the schools IT support would be involved to ensure all data was provided.

Miss Albury had expressed her interest in becoming an associate governor and had been observing the last few board meetings. The vice chair proposed this appointment and it was seconded by the board members with no objections. Miss Albury agreed to join for a 4 year term.

7. Safeguarding

The HT went through the safeguarding report following a recent safeguarding audit which can be found on the governor hub.

Governors asked how often DBS checks are carried out on staff by the school? The HT confirmed that the checks are carried out at the start of employment and then every 3 years as good practice.

Governors asked if there is a trigger or alert in place should something happen with a member of staff within those 3 years? The HT reported that there are no alerts in place unless it is a police matter, staff are trusted and required to make a disclosure should this be the case.

Governors queried if a check every 3 years was sufficient? The HT reported that a DBS check does not have an expiry date and the school carries out the checks every 3 years as part of our safer recruitment practice.

Governors asked if the school has considered using the update service? The clerk reported this has been considered and the school is happy to explore this option further, but after the new build move.

8. Governor training

The HT spoke about the importance of governors to attend 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 complaint

The HT confirmed that a new complaint has been received by the school and brief details of this will be shared once an outcome has been reached.

(ii) Governor vacancy and observers

The board is considering Julie Hickman moving from co-opted governor to become a LA governor. The HT welcomed the observer at the meeting and talked through the process of becoming a governor. The HT explained that a governor's role is to support the school and parent governors should have a genuine interest in school improvement and remain impartial.

10. Heads report

The HT reported that one teacher and one support staff member will be leaving at the end of spring half term. A new teacher has been appointed until the end of the summer term. The HT reported that the MANGO school event was a great success and the school is looking forward to hosting the FUDGE day in the near future.

The HT raised the growing number of voices on the possibility of banning smartphones from September. 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 disorders 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 smart phones 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 iPads 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. Resource Committee

The chair confirmed that there were no new updates since the last resource meeting.

12. Curriculum Committee

Next meeting is scheduled on the 12th February at 6.30 -8.00 pm.

13. Governor Visit

Governor weeks are due in the weeks commencing:

24th February 2025

02nd June 2025

14. New build update

The HT reported that the move is planned for Easter time. The whole school will move across initially while work is completed on the existing CLASP building. The work that caused the delay to the moving date is due to be undertaken in February.

Governors asked if there will be any curriculum planning during the next governor week? The HT will invite Governors to future SLT meetings when we are planning our curriculum learning walks.

Governors reported back on their recent OPAL visit and commended the amount of work that has been carried out to make this a safe and enjoyable part of the school.

The DHT acknowledged how the generous contributions from families made OPAL such a success.

Governors asked who is responsible for pupil premium? The HT confirmed all the year leaders are responsible for this.

The HT reported that over the next few weeks the school will start working with Morgan Sindall to ensure a smooth transition. This will mean changes to playtimes to help manage

480 children with less play space. The HT reported that the demolition will cause entry disruption for the Infants later on in the year but a plan is being worked on for this.

Governors asked how the Infant children would get in? The HT confirmed that they have a rear gate and can use our new school gate which can be accessed through Blagdon Park/Road while the Clasp building is demolished.

Governors asked if there is going to be a wall to separate areas (parents on site and classrooms) and if this is going to create challenges between the school communities? The HT did not feel that this would be the case. The HT sees both school communities accessing the school sites as they currently do. They may be using different routes, however the main priority is to create safe pathways.

Governors asked if the school had worked out a de-camp plan? The HT reported that the school and the LA are working on this and will know more once the move date has been confirmed.

Governors asked if the income generation planning has begun? The HT reported that there has been a lot of interest especially for sports clubs however nothing will be confirmed until the new building is occupied.

15. What impact are Governors having

The HT acknowledged the support received from the governors over the last few months while handling a complaint. The HT thanked the board for the support with the new build, safeguarding audit and the school visits to oversee the overall functioning of the school.

The finance committee Chair also meets regularly with the school business manager to discuss resources.

16. Equality issues and issues raised by parents

No matters were raised.

17. Recognition

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

18. Agenda items for future Governing Board meeting

Accepting apologies from Governors protocol

19. To be actioned

HT to notify Governors of next curriculum learning walks

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

Dates of next FGB meeting

Wednesday 19th March 2025

Wednesday 18th June 2025