

**Burlington Junior School**  
**Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday 20th November 2024**

**Governing Body (14)**

**Co-opted Governors**

Stephen Arbuthnot

Stefan Bown

Rebecca Campbell

Simon Gimour

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 Hakim, Mr Simon Gilmour and Mr Naveed 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 Miss Chloe Albury, class teacher were present

**4. Minutes**

The minutes of the governing board meeting held on 18 September 2024 were approved.

**Follow ups**

Tutoring procedures - The HT confirmed that the school collects and holds data on which teachers are tutoring privately. The school asks staff to be transparent about the children they are tutoring in order to safeguard themselves and the children.

Data will be collected at the start of each term and procedures will be outlined in the staff handbook.

Governors acknowledged that the cost of living crisis is a contributing factor to why there has been an increase in the number of teachers offering to tutor privately. Governors welcomed the service as long as steps are put in place by the school to safeguard all parties involved.

*Governors asked if the school has ever had any reason for concern* - The DHT reported if the families became too friendly with the teachers and the communication between the parties became personal, that would be a concern.

## **5. Safeguarding**

The HT went through the safeguarding report and the actions that were taken.

The HT reported that she requested a safeguarding audit by Emma Clarke following an incident in school. The audit has allowed the school to conduct a thorough review and to implement recommendations where necessary. The staff will receive further training at the next inset day.

The HT considered a lockdown drill at the start of a school day/end of day but is concerned this will cause upset and confusion. Instead the school will do a role play scenario on the Inset day.

Governors suggested opening this up for discussion during governors week or at a parent forum.

The HT liked the idea of the parent forum and will explore this further. The HT confirmed that if the school faced a life threatening situation then the full lockdown drill will be followed immediately.

*Governors asked if the school had guidance on weapon threat and which doors would be locked in this case?* The HT reported the staff would follow the lockdown drill where the alarm would be raised and all doors would be locked.

*Governors asked how well staff are trained to deal with this situation?* The HT reported that the school carries out a lockdown drill annually.

*Governors asked what happens once the doors are closed and how is this communicated through the school?* The HT reported that emergency services are contacted once the alarm has been raised. The school bell is used to alert staff and again to announce the all clear.

The HT reported that the complaints policy has been reviewed and changes have been made to any areas of concern. The HT reported that the school will use a risk assessment for school

events such as assemblies, PTA events and concerts if we have concerns about any families meeting.

Governors suggested updating the code of conduct for visitors/parents and that something could be added to the home-school agreement, newsletters and to the new year 3 parents induction packs. The HT replied much of this had been done already.

Teachers reported that children are taught to identify five safe adults and safe spaces. Teachers talked about how children want to see visual evidence of people being told off and find it hard to understand that 'public humiliation' is not how the school is going to deal with conflict. This can often make children and their families feel unheard.

Governors suggested adding something to pupil voice and add the 5 adults/hands rule to the governors' survey.

## **6. Matters arising**

### **(i) Outcome of stage 2 hearing**

The governor on the hearing panel reported how well the school managed the complaint. The governor on the panel reported the matter concluded with no complaint being upheld.

### **(ii) Governor vacancies**

The HT confirmed that there are currently two vacancies on the board and asked governors to spread the word amongst parents and to put forward their recommendations. Governors suggested that more observers be invited to attend. The school will also send something out in the newsletter.

### **(iii) Governor hub**

The board was encouraged to use the governor hub portal and reminded that it is the main platform of communication between the school and the board. The HT reported the governor code of conduct is under review.

## **7. Heads report**

The HT presented both the head and SIP reports and asked if there were any matters arising from the head's report.

*Governors asked what the schools target is for pupil attendance?* The HT reported it is 97%. The DHT reported that the national average is 93% and that Burlington is achieving above this with attendance levels at 96% +.

*Governors asked if mental health is a cause for absence?* The DHT reported that attendance levels have been worse since Covid because children were given the option to not attend school.

*Governors queried if the school has any cases of persistent absence and how this is dealt with?* The HT reported that the new term being used for this is 'educational neglect' and that the problem is bigger in secondary schools. Burlington currently has two cases of persistent absence. The school's family liaison receives regular training to manage these and we work closely with the EWO.

*Governors asked what the main cause for these could be?* The HT reported that this can affect families who are facing housing challenges. In such cases families have been relocated to a different area and this adds on to their travel time to and from school. These families often want to be rehoused back in the Kingston area and for this reason are reluctant to change their child's school as it would decrease their chances of being rehoused locally. As a result they are willing to travel long distances.

*Governors asks how many families this may affect and how are they classified?* The HT reported an average of 3-5 families at any time may face a housing crisis and that they are classified as vulnerable.

*Governors asked if there has been an increase in fines as a result?* The HT was unable to confirm this and agreed to get the data ready by the next meeting. It could be added to the Headteacher report.

*Governors asked how the sports premiums are being used?* The DHT agreed to provide more details at the next meeting.

*Governors asked where the ADHD data would be reflected in the report?* The HT made note to ask the SENCO for this and to include it in future reports. (It comes under SEMH needs)

Governors acknowledged the challenges schools face in recognising the signs of ADHD in early years and by the time they are diagnosed the school has already put actions in place.

*Governors asked if the school can encourage children to use wellies during OPAL playtime?* The DHT reported that wellies are not seen as trendy footwear by children and suggested that old trainers may seem more favourable.

*Governors asked how often staff received prevent training?* The HT reported this is undertaken annually by staff individually however the school is changing this method for some members of staff. The training will be delivered on INSET days in a group setting for those who will benefit from this approach.

## **SIP Report**

The HT reported that the school has a new SIP Christine Chen whose strength is curriculum development.

*Governors asked if the school is expecting any changes to be made to the curriculum?* The HT reported that there may be changes to the PSHE curriculum and there may be less deep dives and more grouped subjects as a result of Ofsted changes.

### **8. Resource Committee**

The chair went through the most recent minutes.

A teacher asked if the committee would consider a change in the time of the meeting or allow cover for staff to join. This would then allow teachers to attend. The HT agreed to consider this suggestion at the next Resources meeting.

### **9. Curriculum Committee**

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

### **10. Governor Visit**

Next site visit is scheduled on the 13th January at 9.00 am. Governors to contact Morgan Sindall directly if they want to attend.

Governor weeks are due in the weeks commencing:

24th February 2025

02nd June 2025

### **11. 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.

The HT reported that once the school settles down in the new building then the SLT will plan a proposal to put forward to The Bridge team. The offer will be for them to use some of our facilities.

*Governors asked if staff have received any operational training?* The DHT reported that this will be arranged in the new year.

## **12. What impact are Governors having**

The HT acknowledged the overall support received from the governors in making sure the school is operating as it should be. The HT thanked the board for the support with pupil voice surveys, governor week visits and for overseeing the school complaints procedure.

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

## **13. Equality issues and issues raised by parents**

The HT reported on how the school handles concerns raised by parents.

*Governors asked if the recent CPOM's FOI request was a SAR request and could the request be made directly by the child involved?* The DHT reported that this is not the case with primary aged children and suggested it may be the case for secondary school aged children. The HT made a note to get further advice from Satswana and report back at the next meeting. NB Children can make a request but parents must be informed.

*Governors asked how long it takes to find the information requested and who is allowed to request it?* The DHT reported that a 20 page document can take up to 3 hours to prepare and it is usually parents who make the request.

The DHT reported that a question at the parent forum had been raised regarding if the school is considering becoming a smartphone free school. The DHT reported the children do not have access to their phones once they are in school and if the school were to implement this then some parents could offer their children other resources instead, i.e. trips and outings to places, activities at home whereas other families would struggle to do this.

Governors acknowledged that phones are mainly used as a tracking device for primary school aged children.

## **14. Staff Recognition**

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

## **15. Agenda items for future Governing Board meeting**

Feedback on policies, new build update, Governor training (prep for Ofsted), link governors and learning from complaints.

## **16. Any other Business**

The HT reflected on the parent emails and difficult face to face meetings and the impact these have on staff.

*Governors asked what teachers do at the time?* Teachers reported that they seek advice from SLT on the matter. Teachers reported that they continuously work on ways to improve what they do in class and feel disappointed when negative feedback is received.

Governors suggested that in future the school could consider how comments are received and delivered.

The HT reported that staff receive regular reminders on how to handle difficult situations and will be going over this again in the January INSET.

Governors suggested that the schools expectation of the parent's code of conduct could be reminded through parents forums and class WhatsApp groups.

### **To be actioned**

Add 5 hands rule to governor survey

HT to report back on how vulnerable families are classified as a group?

HT to report back on how many absence fines have been given in last 2 years

HT to look at where ADHD data can be included in the heads report

HT to look at how a staff Governor can attend the finance meetings

SBM to ask Satswana on advice on how to deal with repeat requests

SBM to report back on who is allowed to request SAR?

HT to include managing difficult situations between school and parents at next parent forum

HT to find out how CA can become associate governor?

### **Dates of next Full Governors meeting**

**Wednesday 29th January 2025**

**Wednesday 19th March 2025**

**Wednesday 18th June 2025**