

Burlington Junior School
Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday 25th September 2025

Membership Category	Appointed By	Name	Term of Office
LA (1) (<i>Vacant</i>)	Governing Body		
Parent (2)	Election	Sarah Finch (Chair)	22.11.23 - 22.11.27
Parent	Election	Mariam Uteem (Vice Chair) (SEN)	31.01.24 - 31.01.27
Headteacher (1)	Ex-Offio	Pip Utting	
Staff (1)	Election	Jemima Harris	22.03.23 - 22.03.27
Co Opted (9) (2 <i>Vacant</i>)	Governing Body	Stephen Arbuthnot	26.09.23 - 26.09.27
Co Opted	Governing Body	Stefan Bown	02.05.23 - 02.05.27
Co Opted	Governing Body	Rebecca Campbell (H&S/Safeguarding)	28.08.22 - 28.09.26
Co Opted	Governing Body	Simon Gilmour (PPG)	21.11.22 - 21.11.26
Co Opted	Governing Body	Mariam Hakim (EDI)	27.09.22 - 27.09.26
Co Opted	Governing Body	Julie Hickman (LA/PTA/SEN)	21.06.23 - 21.06.27
Co Opted	Governing Body	Kita Ikoku (EDI)	19.03.25 - 19.03.29

In attendance was Ms Angela Langford representing Achieving for Children (AFC)

The Clerk was Miss Aniq Mir

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr M Blow, Mrs C Cripps and Mrs M Hakim. The Board accepted the apologies.

The Board sought clarification on the distinction between accepting and not accepting apologies. The AFC representative advised that regulations state that removal of a governor based on non-attendance may be considered after six months of non-attendance where apologies have not been accepted. It was further advised that each apology should be considered individually, with attention given to the reasons provided.

Actions:

- The board to review the Governor Code of Conduct and propose clearer guidance regarding apologies.
- The Clerk continues to maintain a clear record of communications and subsequent actions.

2. Declaration of Business Interests

No business interests were declared.

The Vice-Chair reminded governors to ensure their declarations are confirmed and up to date on Governor Hub to maintain compliance.

Actions:

- All governors confirm and update their declarations on Governor Hub.

3. Organisational Matters

(i) Election of chair of governors

The Clerk thanked Mrs Finch for putting herself forward for the role of Chair. No further nominations were received. The board voted by a show of hands and Mrs Finch was unanimously elected as Chair of Governors.

Actions:

- Clerk to update records to reflect the appointment of Mrs Finch as Chair.

(ii) Election of vice chair of governors

The Clerk thanked Mrs Uteem for putting herself forward for the role of Vice-Chair. No further nominations were received. The Board voted by a show of hands and Mrs Uteem was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair of governors.

Actions:

- Clerk to update records to reflect the appointment of Mrs Uteem as Vice-Chair

Following confirmation of both chair and Vice-Chair appointments, the clerk invited the new Chair Mrs Finch to continue with the agenda.

(iii) Approval of Associate Member - Mr Blow

The Headteacher explained that AFC Governor Support advised that it is best practice for the Deputy Headteacher to serve as an Associate Member. The Deputy Head had previously attended meetings as an observer. The Board approved the appointment of Deputy Headteacher, Mr Blow, as an Associate Member.

Actions:

- Clerk to update the governor hub to reflect the appointment.

(iv) Review link governor roles

Existing Roles

The Safeguarding Link Governor confirmed she was happy to continue in her role but welcomed additional support due to the breadth of health and safety responsibilities. The chair offered to step in and provide support in this area but noted that balancing this with her new chairing responsibilities

could prove challenging. She also confirmed that, for the same reason, she would no longer continue in the role of pupil premium (PPG) link governor.

It was confirmed that all other existing link governor roles will remain the same.

New Roles

The following roles were discussed and allocated.

- Mrs Ikoku was appointed as Wellbeing Link Governor and as joint EDI link governor
- Chair and two other Governors (Mrs Hickman and Mr Bown) to continue Headteacher performance management responsibilities.
- Safeguarding and Health & Safety Link Governor - Mrs Campbell
- Pupil Premium link Governor – Mr Gilmour
- SEN link Governor/s - Mrs Uteem and Mrs Hickman
- LA, PTA & SEN Link Governor – Mrs Hickman
- EDI Link Governors - Mrs Hakim and Mrs Ikoku
- Mr Arbutnot to confirm RSE Link Governor preference at a later date.
- Mr Bown the nominated governor to complete Safer recruitment training.
- Committees to remain unchanged.
- Three governors must be available to serve on panels should a complaint arise.

Committees

The Chair confirmed that existing committees will remain unchanged.

Headteacher Performance Management

The Board noted that the school currently does not have a Pay Committee but one should be formed. The Headteacher's performance management is undertaken by three governors, including the Chair. The new Chair agreed to take on this responsibility once appropriately trained. The Chair, together with two other governors, will continue to review the Headteacher's performance management.

Next Review Date: 21 October

Safer Recruitment Training

A Governor enquired about which governors have completed Safer recruitment training. The Headteacher suggested that a governor with general availability take on this responsibility to ensure compliance as school interviews take place on a working day and nominated Mr Bown. The nominated governor accepted.

Committees

The Chair confirmed that existing committees will remain unchanged.

Actions:

- Clerk to add the Headteacher performance management review to the calendar and invite the Governors responsible.

- Chair and nominated Governors to ensure performance management procedures are followed and documented.
- Clerk to update records to reflect the link governor roles.

(v) Vacancies

The Board noted that, following two recent resignations and one Governor's pending application to become a Local Authority Governor, there are currently three co-opted Governor vacancies.

The Board discussed strategies to improve the recruitment process to attract candidates who can contribute time, expertise, and knowledge to enhance the Board's effectiveness. Key skills identified as desirable include finance, HR, community engagement, professionalism, and availability.

Potential platforms for advertising the vacancies were considered, including national platforms such as National Governors for Schools and LinkedIn. A Governor suggested Notum as a skills-focused platform. The Headteacher also proposed circulating the advert across local schools, the school newsletter, and local Facebook pages, noting that a local person may be particularly well-suited for the role.

Actions:

- Clerk to prepare and circulate a recruitment advertisement.
- Headteacher to circulate the advert through local schools, the school newsletter, and local social media.
- Board members to assist in identifying and promoting suitable candidates.

4. Minutes

The Board confirmed that they accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025.

Actions:

- Clerk to file the minutes and update records accordingly.

5. Any urgent matters

The Headteacher raised the long-term absence of the Deputy Headteacher due to personal circumstances and highlighted the impact on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the school. She noted that the Deputy Headteacher holds significant responsibilities, and in his absence, the SLT team is operating at full capacity and is overstretched.

The Headteacher reported that:

- The two Assistant Headteachers, who normally work part-time (four days a week), have taken on extra duties and one is now working a full week.
- The School Business Manager has also assumed additional responsibilities alongside ongoing duties, including work related to the new build project.

- Overall, the SLT team is functioning at maximum capacity, limiting their ability to take on additional tasks.

Governors asked whether this issue reflects a wider workload concern and suggested exploring future cover strategies. Governors proposed that staff might consider secondment opportunities for personal development. Governors also suggested that a board member could work with the Headteacher to explore ways to minimize the impact of the Deputy Headteacher's absence.

The Headteacher thanked the board for their support and suggestions but highlighted:

- The financial and insurance implications of providing cover, including the cost of seconding someone at a leadership pay rate, which the school budget cannot currently support.
- The Assistant Head is currently managing a large portion of the Deputy Head's responsibilities, including student oversight and SATs preparation, and is very capable of undertaking this role.
- That alternative options may need to be considered in the future to address the ongoing impact.

Actions:

- Headteacher to continue monitoring SLT workload and identify areas where support may be required.
- Board to consider and discuss feasible strategies to mitigate the impact of the Deputy Headteacher's absence, taking into account budget constraints.

6. Follow-ups from last meeting

(i and ii) The Clerk reported on follow-ups regarding induction and Link Governor impact.

- Feedback from the most recent governor is scheduled this week.
- Clerk will explore improvements to the induction program with AFC Governor Support based on feedback.

Actions:

- Clerk to conduct a feedback meeting with the most recent Governor.
- Clerk, with AFC Governor Support, to develop improvements to the induction program.

(iii and iv). Safeguarding Audit and Governor Hub Reporting

The Headteacher reported that the school had recently undergone a safeguarding audit with the Safeguarding Link Governor. Once the report is available, it will be shared on Governor Hub.

The Clerk confirmed that all Governor reports will be added to Governor Hub and that she will follow up with Link Governors to determine what they would like to feed back to the Board.

A discussion was held regarding the use of Governor Hub to maximise Board efficiency. Key points included:

- The Board is responsible for regularly accessing Governor Hub, updating personal profiles, and using it as the central platform for reports, policies, and approvals.
- Further training may be provided to ensure effective use.
- The Clerk will continue to upload all relevant documents to Governor Hub and share updates as required.

Actions:

- Clerk to upload all Governor reports and relevant documents to Governor Hub.
- Clerk to follow up with Link Governors regarding feedback to be shared with the Board.
- All Governors to ensure regular use of Governor Hub, updating profiles and reviewing documents as necessary.

(v) Follow-Up – Governor Communication via Website

The Head teacher suggested that two governors manage communication via the website, proposed as the Chair and Vice-Chair. Termly updates will:

- Highlight positive observations from governors.
- Showcase contributions and involvement.
- Emphasise achievements and successes.

Actions:

- Chair and Vice-Chair to produce termly governor news for the school website and newsletter.
- Clerk to upload governor news to the website and circulate via newsletter.

7. Safeguarding update

At this stage, the Board moved from the staff room to a classroom to receive a Safeguarding presentation delivered by the Headteacher.

Actions:

- Clerk to add presentation materials on Governor Hub for reference.
- Governors to review the content and raise any follow-up questions at the next meeting.

8. New build update

The Headteacher confirmed that the second phase of building work on the old building is due for completion by the end of half-term, allowing Year 3 to move in after the October half-term break. On the first day back in November, the school will operate a staggered start to avoid closure.

Governor Questions and Responses:

- **Can children move in if the car park is incomplete?** The Headteacher responded; Yes, provided entrances are safe and the buildings are connected with water/ security alarms, etc.
- **What would be the showstoppers preventing occupation?** The Headteacher responded: Any factor that compromises safety, such as incomplete fencing or unsafe access or no water or heating.
- **Would non-functioning toilet facilities be a showstopper?** The Headteacher responded: Yes, toilets must be operational before pupils can move in.
- **Is there any update on Hobkirk House?** The Headteacher confirmed that the demolition has taken place and building works are expected to commence shortly.

Actions:

- Headteacher to provide final confirmation on readiness of Year 3 move-in prior to the first day back after half-term.
- Chair to attend monthly council board meetings and provide updates on Hobkirk House at future meetings until resolved.

9. Governor training

The Chair reminded the Board of the importance of completing training relevant to each Governor's role. The Clerk confirmed that the CPD schedule has been circulated and is also available from AFC Governor Support.

The CPD schedule highlights that:

- All Governors are required to undertake a minimum of three Governor training courses per academic year.
- One of these must be "Inclusive Minds, Stronger Schools – EDI Training for Governors."

Governors were encouraged to prioritise courses that align with their Link Governor roles and to update the training section on Governor Hub once training has been completed. This will support accurate record-keeping of Governor development across the year.

Actions:

- All Governors are to complete a minimum of three training courses per year, including the required EDI module.
- All Governors to update their Governor Hub profiles with completed training.
- Clerk to monitor and record training progress for reporting at future meetings.

10. Working party update

At this stage, the Board moved from the staff room to a classroom to receive a presentation delivered by the Chair of Governors on the work of the Working Party.

Actions:

- Clerk to circulate presentation materials on Governor Hub for reference.
- Governors to review the content and raise any follow-up questions at the next meeting.
- The board to plan and arrange an away day.

11. Head and School Improvement Partner (SIP) Report

The Headteacher confirmed that the Headteacher's Report would be presented at the next Board meeting.

The School Improvement Partner (SIP) Report had been distributed during the summer term, and a refresher copy was circulated ahead of this meeting for Governors to review.

Actions:

- Headteacher to present the Heads Report at the next Board meeting.
- All Governors to review the SIP Report and prepare any follow-up questions for discussion at the next meeting.

12. Policy approvals

The Board held a discussion regarding the process for reviewing and approving policies. This discussion arose following recent uploads of policies by the Clerk to Governor Hub, after which several Governors raised questions about the review mechanism.

The Clerk acknowledged that while Governor Hub serves as the central platform for sharing documents, there is currently no structured process in place to support policy review, comment, and approval.

The Headteacher noted that she and the Clerk had already discussed the need for a more efficient approach. They proposed that policies be circulated in a shared document format where comments can be tracked collectively, allowing Governors to review and contribute transparently.

After discussion, the Board agreed that moving policy reviews to a dedicated Governors' SharePoint site may offer a more effective and collaborative solution.

Actions:

- Headteacher and Clerk to liaise with IT to set up a dedicated Governors' SharePoint site.
- Once established, Clerk uploads policy documents to SharePoint for Board review and comment.
- Board to evaluate the effectiveness of the new system after initial implementation.

13. Resource Committee

There was no update to share at this meeting. It was noted that the next Resource Committee meeting will take place on Friday, 17th October at 9:00 a.m.

14. Curriculum Committee

There was no update to share at this meeting. It was noted that the next Curriculum Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday, 12th November at 7:00 p.m.

15. Governor Visit

It was noted that the next round of Governor visits is scheduled for the week commencing 3rd November. The Headteacher will issue invitations to Governors to visit the school, meet with staff and students, and observe practice. Feedback from these visits will be shared at the subsequent Board meeting.

Actions:

- Resource Committee Chair to provide an update at the 17th of October meeting.
- Headteacher to send out Governor visit invitations and collate feedback for the next Board meeting.

16. What impact are Governors having

The Headteacher thanked the Board for their continued contribution and support to the school and the leadership team. Appreciation was expressed for Governors':

- Active participation during Governor Weeks and visits.
- Involvement in Health and Safety visits.
- Contribution to policy review and approval.
- Ongoing commitment to the Working Party, which is progressing recommendations arising from the complaint reviewed last year.

The Headteacher noted that the school values the Governors' time, commitment, and the positive impact their engagement continues to have on the school's development and improvement.

17. Staff Recognition

The Headteacher confirmed that staff recognitions will be compiled and sent across to the Chair for acknowledgment and inclusion in the next meeting.

Actions:

- Headteacher to forward staff recognitions to the Chair.
- Chair to review and include recognitions at the next Governing Board meeting.

18 Agenda items for future Governing Board meeting

The agenda for the next meeting will include:

- Head's Report
- School Improvement Partner (SIP) Report

Additional agenda items will be confirmed closer to the meeting date.

Dates of next FGB meeting

Wednesday 26 November 2025

Wednesday 21 January 2026

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Wednesday 10 June 2026