

**Burlington Junior School**  
**Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday 18th June 2025**

**Governing Body (14)**

**Co-opted Governors**

Stephen Arbuthnot (Chair)  
Stefan Bown (Vice Chair)  
Rebecca Campbell (Safeguarding & H&S)  
Simon Gilmour (PPG)  
Mariam Hakim (EDI)  
Julie Hickman (SEN/LA/PTA)  
Naveed Shah  
Kita Ikiko  
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 Hall - apologies received

Mrs Hakim - absent without apologies

**2. Declaration of Business Interests**

No business interests were declared.

**3. Non-Governor Participants/Observers**

Mr Blow, Deputy Head Teacher (DHT), Mrs Kerr (School Business Manager), Robert Shankland and Helen Edmondson representing Royal Borough of Kingston were present

**4. Minutes**

The minutes of the governing board meeting held on 19 March 2025 were approved.

**5. Any urgent matters**

No urgent matters were declared

## **6. New Build update by Robert Shankland**

A presentation on the new school was delivered by Robert Shankland (RS), representing the Royal Borough of Kingston.

RS reported that this will be his final week in his role as project officer and he will be succeeded by Alexandra Mares

***The HT informed the meeting that the governors had recently sent correspondence to Pick Everard and the contractor Morgan Sindall (MS), seeking clarification on whether the Victorian building would be ready by September as originally planned, or if the suggested possible delays were still expected?*** RS confirmed that issues causing delays have now been resolved, and the building should be on track to be completed by September this year.

***The HT questioned why a September completion date had been agreed if delays were still considered likely as per a recent communication?*** RS said he was unable to comment at this stage, until further discussion had taken place with the contractor.

***The HT raised concerns about the timing and clarity of communication, particularly in relation to the upcoming message scheduled to go out next week to the new Year 3 parents joining in September?*** RS acknowledged the concern and was apologetic, assuring the group that efforts are being made to reach a resolution. He also recognised the significant knock-on effect that even minor delays can have on school planning and parent communication.

***Governors noted that the school has compiled a comprehensive list of outstanding snagging issues. However, they expressed concern that progress on addressing these items has not been visible and requested a clear timeline for when the work will be completed?*** RS reported that there were multiple lists set up while SIMS was not working. These have now been uploaded and sent to the contractors' head office. It has been recognised that the lists compiled by the contractor are not user friendly and we are waiting for a response from them on what is being done. We have arranged meetings with the contractor to get some answers and will keep the school informed. We want to make sure that each job is completed and closed.

***Governors explained that the list has been divided into three areas (i) Snags (ii) Defects (iii) Other issues. Concerns have been raised around the operational functions and that there was no proper handover offered?*** RS was apologetic and assured that these concerns have been noted and raised with the contractor.

***The HT reminded RS that the balcony garden remains inaccessible due to safety concerns and asked if another company could be considered to carry out the necessary work?*** RS explained that while the current contractor has submitted a cost proposal, it is not considered a suitable solution. He agreed that a smaller, more specialised company may be more appropriate and confirmed that this option is currently being explored.

***The HT asked whether the construction of the Victorian block is being carried out with all previously identified snags and issues in mind, and what assurances there are that such oversights will not be repeated?*** RS responded that all concerns raised have been understood and noted. He assured the board that measures are being taken to prevent a recurrence of these issues. He also acknowledged

*that the previous training delivered was not sufficiently thorough and confirmed that this will be addressed moving forward.*

The HT reported that the children had written letters to the governors, expressing their views on what they liked and disliked about the school. A common theme among the responses was dissatisfaction with the furniture, particularly the chairs provided. To illustrate the issue, the HT displayed four chairs from different year groups side by side. The comparison clearly demonstrated that the furniture was not appropriately sized for the children's needs.

***Governors asked whether the contractor was being unresponsive or slow in addressing ongoing issues? RS acknowledged that there had been delays and confirmed that this flaw in communication and responsiveness has been recognized.***

***Governors asked whether the retention amount had been withheld from the contractor? RS confirmed that the retention amount has been withheld.***

***Governors asked if there was an option to set a firm deadline tied to the release of retention funds? RS responded that while this is under consideration, caution is required due to contractual obligations and the nature of certain jobs that fall outside the original scope of the contract.***

***Governors asked how committed the contractors were to set clear timeframes for the remaining work? RS confirmed that regular weekly meetings have now been scheduled to review the outstanding task list and facilitate more effective feedback. The intention is to ensure consistent progress and resolution in the best interest of all stakeholders.***

Governors expressed their disappointment that the planned half-term break work was not carried out as expected. They also raised concerns about the potential for similar delays to occur over the upcoming summer holidays, given previous experiences.

***Governors asked who holds responsibility for signing off the completed work and ensuring that all compliance checks have been completed? RS confirmed that the Local Authority is responsible for signing off the work. He also acknowledged that the governor's emails have been helpful in supporting the process and raising important issues.***

At this point the HT distributed letters written by the children to the governors. The letters shared the pupils' views on the new school, highlighting what they appreciate, raising areas of concern and offering suggestions of improvement. The governors agreed to send responses to the children in recognition of their thoughtful contributions.

## **7. Follow-ups from last meeting**

(1) HT to notify Governors of next curriculum learning walks - This has been deferred to the autumn term due to ongoing building related issues.

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

### **SCR cost comparison and proposal to use the DBS Update Service**

We currently pay £58.95 per DBS application, which is renewed every three years. This equates to £19.65 per year per application when spread over the three-year period.

### **Proposal: Transition to the DBS Update Service**

To improve efficiency and reduce long-term costs, we are considering signing up for the DBS Update Service from the start of the new academic year. Below is a breakdown of the cost implications and benefits:

#### **Existing staff with a DBS certificate**

Instead of renewing their DBS checks every three years at £58.95, we would subscribe them to the DBS Update Service at £16 per year. Over a three-year period, this would total £48, resulting in a saving of £10.95 per person compared to the current approach.

#### **New staff with No DBS Certificate**

For new staff who do not already hold a DBS certificate, the initial £58.95 fee will still apply. However, at the end of the initial three year period they will be enrolled in the update service at £16 per year, avoiding the need for full applications as long as they remain subscribed.

#### **New staff with an existing DBS**

If a new member of staff already has a valid DBS registered with the update service, we would simply begin paying the £16 annual subscription. This will remain in place for the duration of their employment. Upon leaving, they can choose to continue the subscription personally, or we would cancel it.

#### **Volunteers**

Currently, DBS checks for volunteers cost £9.45 per application. Under the update service, these checks would be free of charge, further reducing our overhead.

#### **External extended services (clubs)**

External providers are expected to carry out their own DBS checks. In instances where we assist in processing their applications, we invoice them to recover the associated cost. This practice will continue as part of our compliance procedures.

#### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

With the outlined cost savings and efficiency gains, we plan to adopt the DBS Update Service from the beginning of the next academic year.

#### **Additional agenda item**

##### **Lettings proposal summary**

The following lettings proposal was delivered by the schools business manager Mrs Kerr.

We have identified a lettings company that presents a more cost effective solution for the school. Importantly, this new arrangement will not result in any loss of revenue from our existing lettings agreements.

Key features of the proposed package:

- Cost effective external partnership: The school will partner with a professional lettings company to reduce overhead and streamline operations.
- Maintain current lettings revenue: This arrangement preserves the schools existing lettings income.
- Company-employed staff: The lettings company will employ its own staff and cover all related costs, including providing sick-leave cover for absences.

- Dedicated key-holder: A key holder will be provided by the company to ensure secure and reliable access to the facilities for bookings.
- 50/50 revenue split: All income from lettings will be shared equally with 50% going to the school and 50% to the lettings company.

This partnership reduces the school's administrative burden, offers improved efficiency, and ensures a stable revenue stream.

***Governors queried whether there was any scope for negotiating a higher percentage return for the school, or the possibility of securing a more favourable financial arrangement within the proposed lettings agreement?*** In response the company stated that unfortunately there was no flexibility on the proposed percentage. As they are starting from zero, they must ensure that their overheads are covered in order to avoid operating at a loss.

***Governors requested reassurance regarding the contractors vetting and procedures. Specifically, they would like to understand how staff are vetted and what measures are in place to ensure appropriate cover if a member of your team is absent?*** To ensure cover at all times staff rotas are prepared one month in advance. Any changes to the schedule are reviewed and approved and verified by both the area manager and team leader. In the event of an emergency or unexpected absence, a backup staff member is already included on the rota to provide immediate cover. If additional support is required, the team leader or area manager will step in to cover the shift personally.

***Governors asked in the event that a member of your staff were to accidentally cause damage to the premises for example by leaving a tap running and causing a flood would this be covered under your company's insurance policy?*** Yes, this would be covered under our public liability insurance, which provides coverage up to £10 million.

***Governors asked do area managers carry out regular spot checks to ensure quality, compliance and adherence to agreed procedures?*** – Yes, area managers conduct regular spot checks, visiting five of their schools each week. This ensures that each school is visited at least once every two weeks. Additionally, they perform comprehensive six-monthly audits to verify that all standards and procedures are consistently maintained.

***Governors understood the rationale for the 50/50 revenue split in the first year to cover initial set up costs. Would it be possible to consider a reduced rate in the second and subsequent years, once these initial expenses have been recouped?*** The 50/50 split is not solely intended to cover initial setup costs. Our expenses also include staffing, cleaning equipment, insurance, marketing, customer service team and other ongoing operational costs. Additionally with the sliding upwards scale the schools share increases as letting income grows, providing the school with a greater proportion of revenue as sales rise.

***Governors asked the contractor to clarify the school's liability in cases where unforeseen circumstances, such as building issues, prevent a planned letting from taking place?*** In the event that a facility becomes unavailable for any reason, customers would be promptly contacted and informed. We would make every effort to relocate the booking to an alternative facility. Under these circumstances, the school would not be held liable for any inconvenience caused.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Governor visit feedback - Safeguarding Focus

As part of the governor week, a governor provided feedback following her recent visit to the school. During the visit, she met with the Headteacher and Family Liaison Officer to review the school's safeguarding practices.

The Family Liaison Officer shared details of the school's work with external agencies, and safeguarding arrangements within the new building were also reviewed. As the school is relatively new, it was noted that this area will continue to develop over the coming months, with a more detailed review scheduled for September.

The governor also discussed the previous safeguarding audit and reflected on the recommendations made following a complaint. These recommendations have been addressed through a review of the schools policies and procedures and have been monitored throughout the year. The resulting actions and recommendations have been included in the safeguarding audit report, which is available on the governor hub.

In addition, the governor met with pupils to hear their views on safety in the new school building and how they feel the environment supports their wellbeing.

### **Cybersecurity and IT access**

The governor reported that some issues had been identified regarding IT access, Cybersecurity, and data backup systems in the event of a system failure.

The HT reported that these concerns were discussed with the schools IT department. The IT team confirmed that platforms such as CPOMS is cloud-based and accessible remotely, ensuring continued access in the event of a system failure. In addition, paper copies of key confidential data are securely held on site and can be accessed if needed during a cyber incident.

The HT reported that the school is confident that, in the event of a serious system outage, it has the appropriate measures in place to access critical safeguarding and contact information without delay.

## **9. Governor training**

### **Governor feedback on training session**

Governors shared positive feedback on the recent online training sessions. They found the training a useful learning experience especially the group discussions which were insightful. There were more opportunities to ask questions which made the experience more interactive and engaging.

Two key reflections emerged from the experience:

1. Induction and resources - The governor expressed a desire to better understand what additional support exists beyond the training itself?
2. Measuring governor impact - The governor raised questions about how governors can measure the long-term impact of the board and, in particular, the role of individual governors. The governor suggested it would be helpful to know and reflect on individual impact particularly over a four-year term and to understand the difference they're making i.e. a link Governor role.

The Clerk to contact Governor support for some advice on this.

## **10. Matters Arising**

### **(i) School website governor section**

Governors suggested that reports for parents about their role are added to the governor section.

Governors suggested a termly letter from the board to parents highlighting the positives. This could include collective feedback from governor weeks and learning walks.

Action: 2 Governors to take responsibility for this

### **(ii) Proposed working party**

The chair outlined that, over the past year, some complaints have been received and investigated. These have involved formal processes and in most cases, have been investigated independently and have been chaired by independent governors from outside the school. As a result of these processes, a number of recommendations have been issued by the complaints panels.

The chair explained that while the governing board is not able to discuss the specific details of the complaints in this meeting, he proposed that a working party be established to review the panel recommendations in detail. The small group of governors will be tasked with formulating a clear action plan outlining how the recommendations should be implemented.

The working party is expected to report back at the next meeting with its proposed action plan. Governors felt this time frame was too tight and realistically this would happen by the end of the Autumn term. It was also emphasised that the working party should work closely with governor support, who have been involved throughout the complaints process and have offered their continued support.

Governors were invited to ask any questions and express interest in participating in the working party.

A governor raised that some members of the board had received an email from the complainant earlier in the day. The complainant had raised a point that during the investigations they were told that the outcome reports should be made available to the board as well as the recommendations.

The chair explained that this is not in line with the advice received from governor support. The chair clarified that the complaint and the procedures followed are strictly confidential and are only shared between the complainant, the subject of complaint and the complaints panel. It was emphasised that the board must remain mindful of these confidentiality principles when handling such matters going forward.

The chair invited members of the board to volunteer to join the newly established working party. It was emphasised that those selected to take part must not have had any prior involvement with the complaints in question, nor have served on any related complaints panels, in order to ensure impartiality and fairness when reviewing the recommendation.

Four members of the governing board volunteered to form the working party. The group represents a balanced composition in terms of gender and ethnicity, offering a diverse range of perspectives.

The chair addressed the recruitment process for the roles of chair and vice-chair, confirming that elections will take place at the first full governing board (FGB) meeting in September. He noted that historically, these appointments have been made through a show of hands at the meeting, with limited interest from other board members stepping forward for the roles. In response to a recommendation from a recent complaint process, which advised that the board should implement a clear succession plan and ensure a transparent and open election process each September for all chairing roles, the chair encouraged members to consider putting themselves forward. When asked if he intended to step down, the chair expressed his strong desire for a new governor to be appointed to the role of chair from September.

## **11. Heads report**

The Headteacher (HT) presented her report and invited governors to ask questions or seek clarification on any of the items discussed.

***Governors requested that data relating to behaviour and bullying be shared in future reports?*** The DHT advised that, due to the sensitive nature of the data, it may be more appropriate to review this information as part of the safeguarding audit rather than sharing it more widely.

The HT reported on three recent accidents that have occurred within a short time frame since the move to the new building that had resulted in a broken bone. She emphasised that the incidents were purely accidental with no indication of any other child being involved or responsible.

***Governors asked whether the school had conducted any fire evacuation drills since moving into the new building?*** The DHT confirmed that two fire drills have already taken place (we do 2 a term). It was also noted that a Legionella report has been completed.

***Governors asked how bullying is tracked within the school?*** The DHT explained that staff report incidents efficiently using the schools CPOMS system.

***Governors asked whether low level incident data indicated any emerging trends?*** The HT responded that such patterns would be more appropriately identified through the Health & Safety link Governor reports and she made a note to action this going forward.

***Governors also inquired about staff wellbeing and whether the recent move has impacted teaching and learning?*** The DHT acknowledged the challenges associated with the move and how it had affected various aspects of school operations. Staff have indicated that completing day-to-day tasks are taking longer, largely due to the increased size of the new building and the greater distance required to move between areas. Communication between staff has also been affected. Staff are currently developing new methods to communicate effectively within the larger space. It was also noted that changes to the schools IT systems were not ideally timed. Looking ahead at the upcoming move back to the old building, the school is working towards a more structured transition.

## **School Improvement Report (SIP) Report**

The HT confirmed that the SIP report will be made available following the recent SIP visit on 12th June.

## **12. Policy approvals**

The HT reminded the board to continue approving policies via the Governor Hub portal. She also noted that any new policies, or changes to existing ones, will be shared following the completion of the working party's work on the recent recommendations.

## **13. Resource Committee**

The next meeting is scheduled on the 11th of July at 8.00 am.

## **13. Curriculum Committee**

The next meeting is scheduled for on the 12th of November at 7.00 pm.

## **15. Governor Visit**

The next governor week is scheduled for the week commencing 03rd November.

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 brief summary of their visit to the clerk for her to upload onto the portal.

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

The HT expressed her appreciation for the support received from governors during the transition to the new building. She also highlighted the success of the recent governor week visits, noting that they provided valuable opportunities for both children and staff to share their views post move.

## **17. Equality issues and issues raised by parent**

### **(i) Parents feedback on Nourish halal meat survey**

The chair brought to the board's attention an equality concern that has been raised by parents, not directly to the school but via a governor. The issue relates to the recent Halal meat survey conducted by the school's catering provider Nourish.

It was raised that the way that the junior school communicated with parents regarding this sensitive matter did not feel as genuine or personal compared to the approach taken by the Infant school. Specifically, it was noted that the infant school's headteacher had personally signed off the letter to parents, which gave the communication a more personal and connected tone. In contrast, the junior school's correspondence lacked that same personal touch, which some parents found disappointing.

The HT explained that a parent from one year group shared a message in the class WhatsApp group expressing strong views against the provision of halal meat in school. The content of the message was considered offensive and has been brought to the school's attention. The HT confirmed that she has spoken with the infant school leadership to discuss how future communications can be better aligned, ensuring both schools send out letters with consistent content and tone. She also contacted the parent representatives to gather their views on managing WhatsApp messages that were not solely about non uniform days or PTA events for example. She also asked whether they felt confident in addressing

inappropriate comments shared by parents, or whether they would prefer to refer such matters to the school team. The class representatives confirmed they felt comfortable challenging parents by reminding them what the app was for and then directing them to the school on other matters that were beyond the normal day to day use it was intended for.

In support of the school, a governor expressed that they did not believe the school had done anything wrong and felt that the school has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to accommodating the different communities it serves. They highlighted that Burlington is an inclusive school, and while it is unfortunate that some parents hold and share certain views, the school cannot control individual opinions or comments.

**Governors asked whether this concern had been formally closed?** The chair clarified that it had not been submitted as an official complaint but rather raised as a concern. As such, there is no formal conclusion required. The matter was acknowledged, addressed, and is now considered resolved.

### 17. Staff Recognition

The HT will submit recommendations to the chair of board.

### 18 Agenda items for future Governing Board meeting

- Appointment of the new Chair and Vice Chair
- Safeguarding training

### 19. To be actioned

#### Dates of next FGB meeting

Wednesday 24 September 2025

Wednesday 26 November 2025

Wednesday 21 January 2026

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Wednesday 10 June 2026

#### Governing Board Constitution

	Responsibility	First appointed	Term from	Term until
Stephen Arbuthnot	Chair	20.11.2019	26.09.2023	25.09.2027
Stefan Bown	Vice Chair	02.05.2019	02.05.2023	02.05.2027
Rebecca Campbell	Safeguarding and H&S	28.09.2022	28.09.2022	27.09.2026
Simon Gilmour	PPG	21.11.2018	21.11.2022	21.11.2026
Mariam Hakim	EDI	27.09.2022	27.09.2022	26.09.2026

Julie Hickman	SEN/LA/PTA	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	PPG	21.06.2023	22.11.2023	21.11.2027
Mariam Uteem	SEN	31.01.2024	31.01.2023	30.01.2027
Pip Utting	Head teacher	01.09.2010		
Matt West	Staff Governor	29.09.2021	29.09.2021	28.09.2025
Jemima Harris	Staff Governor	22.03.2023	22.03.2027	22.03.2027