

Burlington Junior School

Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Membership Category	Appointed By	Name	Term of Office
LA (1)	Governing Body	Julie Hickman (LA/PTA/SEN)	21.06.23 - 21.06.27
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-Officio	Pip Utting (Head Teacher)	
Staff (1)	Election	Jemima Harris	22.03.23 - 22.03.27
Co Opted (9) (1 Vacant)	Governing Body	Stephen Arbuthnot (Curriculum Committee Chair)	26.09.23 - 26.09.27
Co Opted	Governing Body	Stefan Bown, (Resource Committee Chair)	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) (Pay Committee Chair)	21.11.22 - 21.11.26
Co Opted	Governing Body	Mariam Hakim (EDI)	27.09.22 - 27.09.26
Co Opted	Governing Body	Kita Ikoku (EDI & Wellbeing)	19.03.25 - 19.03.29
Co Opted	Governing Body	Abbie Jackson	21.01.26 – 21.01.2030

In attendance: No observers in attendance

Clerk: Anika Mir

The Chair welcomed all attendees and requested consent to audio-record the meeting to support accurate minute-taking. The Board unanimously consented.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr. S Bown and Mrs. C Cripps. No further apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Business Interests

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

Actions: All governors to confirm and update their declarations on Governor Hub.

3. Organisational Matters

(i) Vacancies

The Clerk confirmed that there remains one outstanding Co-opted Governor vacancy. No new expressions of interest have been received since the previous meeting.

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The Board agreed that advertising for the vacancy should continue, with a particular emphasis on attracting candidates whose skills strengthen the governing body's needs.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Chair invited comments; none were raised. The minutes of the meeting held on **21 January** were approved as a true and accurate record.

Action: Chair to sign the approved minutes on Governor Hub.

5. Any Urgent Matters

None raised

6. Follow-ups from Last Meeting

(i) Update new appointments on Governor Hub

The Clerk confirmed that all newly agreed appointments have now been updated on Governor Hub.

Status: *Completed.*

(ii) Chair to sign approved minutes on Governor Hub

The Chair reported that the minutes have likely been signed but will re-check to confirm completion.

Action: Chair to verify and sign the approved minutes on Governor Hub if still outstanding.

(iii) Site meeting – 6 February

The previously scheduled site meeting took place as planned, and the action is now closed.

Status: *Closed / No further action required.*

(iv) Monitoring governor training

The Clerk confirmed that governor training continues to be monitored. Governors noted strong engagement with CPD opportunities, with many already signed up for and completing courses.

Status: *Ongoing.*

(v) Maintain Governor SharePoint Site & Implement Policy-Renewal Tracking Spreadsheet

Work to maintain the Governor SharePoint site and develop the policy-renewal tracking spreadsheet is ongoing.

Status: *Ongoing.*

(vi) Arrange additional Pay Committee meeting

Arrangements for the next Pay Committee meeting remain in progress.

Status: *Ongoing.*

(vii) Governors to sign the Code of Conduct on Governor Hub

The Clerk reported that several governors still need to sign the updated Code of Conduct.

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Action: Clerk to send out reminder to outstanding governors to sign the Code of Conduct on Governor Hub.

7. Safeguarding – Playgrounds and Gate Security

The Headteacher provided an update on safeguarding concerns relating to playground supervision, gate security and building access.

The school continues to engage with the local authority, to resolve outstanding safety issues. Despite repeated escalation, progress has been slow while the council awaits clarity on remaining project finances, resulting in limited action to date.

Playground equipment:

The school recently received basketball posts; however, the posts delivered were fixed-ground models rather than the mobile, wheeled units previously agreed. Although the correct posts were briefly delivered, they were subsequently removed and have not been replaced. The school holds written confirmation that mobile units will be provided.

Gate and building exit risks:

Governors discussed ongoing concerns about the uncontrolled release mechanisms on several doors:

- A release button located by the lift in the Honeycomb building enables children to exit unsupervised.
- No alarm is fitted, meaning a child could exit the site undetected via the lane gates.
- Repeated requests to the council for remediation have not resulted in action.

A further hazard was noted regarding an overhanging magnetic plate, which has not yet been rectified. A temporary sign has been installed warning “Mind your head”.

Governors expressed strong concern about continued delays and emphasised that the current gaps pose a significant safeguarding risk.

Interim mitigations:

The following interim measures were discussed:

- Consider installing a temporary, low-cost alarm or sounder on the door to alert staff when opened.
- Risk-assessing and, if permitted, temporarily closing the door as a fire exit, with clear signage and alternative escape routes identified.
- Ensuring all relevant changes are documented in the fire safety plan.
- Seeking clarification on exit routes from the IT suite, which has two alternative escape points.

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Governors' escalation:

The Board agreed that waiting for further delays was unacceptable. Governors requested that a formal letter be drafted, outlining safeguarding concerns and setting a clear deadline for action. If unresolved, the school may proceed with temporary safety measures and invoice the council. The letter will be copied to Emma Clark, safeguarding lead for the borough.

Action:

- Chair to draft a concise escalation letter for review by the Headteacher, setting a deadline for council action.
- SLT to consider temporary door-alarm or door-closure solutions and update the relevant risk assessments.

Year 3 play area water ingress:

A recent leak, originating just beyond the school boundary on the Infant School side, has now been repaired (February half term). The Headteacher confirmed the issue has ceased. A report is awaited to confirm whether the leak was connected to building works or coincidental.

The Infant School is awaiting clarity regarding responsibility for water usage costs incurred.

Playground injuries:

The earlier cluster of playground injuries has now subsided. Monitoring continues. One previously escalated incident is being handled through communication between the Chair of Governors and the parent involved; it is not being treated as a complaint.

8. Building Update

Governors noted that many building-related issues raised under safeguarding also relate to broader snagging and project completion concerns.

The Headteacher reported ongoing frustrations with the local authority and project teams, who appear reluctant to address outstanding defects due to anticipated cost and resource implications. Governors noted that officers appear “defeated” and unwilling to challenge the main contractor, despite known compliance issues (e.g., ventilation performance, balcony access constraints, acoustic deficiencies).

The school reiterated concerns regarding:

- Ventilation and temperature control in key areas, which were problematic during the previous summer.
- The need for potential low-cost interim solutions (e.g., installing ventilation grills) if the full compliant system is not feasible in the short term.
- Restrictions on commissioning independent contractors until April, when control of the building fully transfers to the school. An example was given of plans to install a toilet in the staff shower room due to existing queues.

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Governors advised scheduling further meetings during warmer weather to demonstrate the severity of ventilation issues directly to the council.

Balcony / Sport England space:

The council has indicated (informally) that expanded space—linked to Sport England requirements—would only be needed once the school reaches five-form entry. They have suggested locking the balcony area until that point, which governors disagreed with and requested be formally documented.

Future steps:

Governors noted that continued escalation may be required, potentially involving councillors if progress remains limited.

No additional snags were identified during the meeting.

9. Governor Training

The Board received an update on governor training. Governors reported strong engagement with a wide range of CPD opportunities since the previous meeting.

Several governors shared recent courses completed, including:

- **Managing Allegations & Role of the LADO** – offering clarity on referral routes and thresholds. Governors found the session informative and useful for understanding statutory responsibilities.
- **Ofsted Update Training** – highlighted the increasing national focus on *inclusion*, with Ofsted expecting schools to demonstrate robust practice in curriculum accessibility and support for vulnerable groups. Governors recognised that the school is already well-aligned due to its relational behaviour policy and inclusive ethos.
- **Whole-School Approach to Mental Wellbeing** – delivered via NHS services, this session outlined resources available to schools, including workshops for parents and staff and structured wellbeing audits. Governors noted that Burlington is already accessing several of these support pathways, including family workshops and anxiety-management sessions.
- **Health & Safety for Governors** – updated guidance on reviewing risk assessments, conducting site visits, and identifying areas requiring escalation.
- **Governor Visits Training and Complaints Management / Robust Investigations** – providing insight into expectations for documentation, fair investigation processes, and how visit reports are reviewed during Ofsted inspections.

Governors emphasised the importance of uploading visit reports and CPD certificates to Governor Hub to maintain an accurate training record, particularly in readiness for future inspection.

The Board reaffirmed the expectation that all governors complete at least three CPD courses per academic year, including mandatory Safeguarding and EDI modules.

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Actions:

- All governors to continue completing CPD and updating their training records on Governor Hub.
- Clerk to monitor progress and remind governors where records remain outstanding

10. Working Party Update

The Chair noted that there was no formal Working Party update for this meeting; however, governors discussed several matters relevant to ongoing governance development.

Governors revisited the expectations around the use of Governor Hub, SharePoint, and the newly implemented systems for organising visit reports and documentation. Recent training highlighted that, during Ofsted inspections, governors may be asked to provide evidence of visit activity—particularly in cases where individual governors are unavailable to meet inspectors in person. Governors therefore emphasised the importance of uploading all visit notes in a consistent and accessible format.

The Clerk confirmed that a dedicated folder exists on the Governor SharePoint site for storing visit records, and governors were reminded to upload their reports directly or to forward them to the Clerk for filing. Templates previously provided by the Headteacher were acknowledged as helpful in supporting consistent reporting.

A governor shared that a revised link governor visit template had been prepared, adapted from the learning-walk format, ensuring alignment with the School Development Plan and strengthening evidence trails for monitoring activities. This will support standardisation of reporting across all link roles.

Governors also confirmed that the Working Party's prior actions—relating to policy review processes, use of SharePoint for consultation, and communication protocols—remain in place and continue to guide ongoing practice, with no new changes proposed at this meeting.

11. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher presented the written report previously circulated to governors, and invited questions. A detailed discussion followed, with governors seeking clarification across several key areas of school performance, safeguarding, pastoral support, curriculum, and resourcing.

Safeguarding, Behaviour and Inclusion

Governors questioned recent trends in behaviour, including incidents logged as racist and sexualised behaviour.

- **Racist language:** The Deputy Head explained that incidents typically arise from children repeating language heard elsewhere, often without understanding the impact. The school

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logs all racist language as racism for consistency and has included guidance in the staff bulletin. No particular group is being targeted, though some incidents relate to physical appearance or facial features.

- **Sexualised behaviour:** Examples include inappropriate touching such as pinching or slapping bottoms. These are logged due to the impact on the recipient even when intent is not malicious. Education around boundaries is provided directly to the children involved, with whole-class or assembly-based input used where appropriate.
- **Police-led assemblies:** To support understanding of physical boundaries, the school has arranged for police officers to deliver assemblies to Years 5 and 6 on safe conduct, consent, and the legal implications of physical behaviour outside school.

Governors noted the proactive steps taken and endorsed the continued close monitoring of patterns over time.

Pastoral Support and Young Carers

Governors queried the significant increase in pupils identified as young carers.
The Headteacher confirmed:

- The rise relates largely to changing family circumstances rather than new arrivals.
- Identification relies on children or parents disclosing involvement, as external agencies cannot share lists for confidentiality reasons.
- Siblings of children with SEND can also be classed as young carers, contributing to the increase.
- The school continues to work closely with external services and provides access to Saturday groups, pastoral interventions, and Thrive/ELSA support as needed.

Staffing

The Headteacher updated governors on staffing changes:

- The school has successfully recruited a new DSL, who is shadowing the outgoing DSL and brings experience with Thrive-based emotional support.
- Two ECTs have been appointed for the next academic year.
- Several staff members are relocating out of London, resulting in anticipated additional vacancies.

Curriculum and Attainment

Governors queried several aspects of the data included in the written report:

- **Assessment data:** Governors reviewed trends in attainment and progress, including subject reports and SATs information.
- **Greater Depth provision:** Leaders described how retrieval practice, reasoning tasks and challenge activities ensure higher-attaining pupils move swiftly to deeper learning.

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- **Year group variations:** Notable demographic differences—such as Year 4’s higher number of girls and no EHCPs—were discussed. Governors were assured that SEND processes are ongoing where relevant.

Attendance, Behaviour and Safeguarding Data

Governors identified missing fields on the data page (e.g., suspensions and number of pupils in alternative provision).

The Headteacher confirmed:

- No pupils are currently in alternative provision.
- Suspensions this term are low; full details will be added to the updated report.
- Any missing data fields will be populated in the next version.

Trips, Costs and Participation

Governors raised queries about the cost of educational visits, including:

- **Year 4 Walton Firs trip:** Higher cost explained as an all-day outdoor adventure programme replacing previous residential-style experiences.
- **Year 6 PGL:** Costs continue to rise nationally; current uptake is approximately half the year group. The school subsidises transport and accommodation from its own budget, with PPG support applied where possible.
Alternative timings (e.g., October) previously resulted in low participation due to 11+ preparation, making summer the only viable option.

SEND, Inclusion and Wellbeing

The Headteacher highlighted:

- Ongoing inclusion work aligns well with updated Ofsted expectations, particularly around relational behaviour.
- The mental-health team continues to deliver workshops for families, including targeted groups for Tamil and Korean communities.
- The school maintains strong pastoral provision through ELSA/Thrive and partnership with external agencies.

12. SIP Report

The Headteacher noted that the School Improvement Partner (SIP) report had been circulated separately to governors in advance of the meeting. As the majority of the SIP’s recent work has focused on curriculum development and subject leadership, it was agreed that the full review and discussion of the SIP report would take place at the next Curriculum Committee, where the detail is most appropriate.

Governors were reminded that the school’s SIP, Chris Chen, continues to provide strong curriculum-focused challenge and guidance, with recent reviews centred on the progression of subject leadership, the impact of curriculum sequencing, and the development of consistent

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pedagogical practice across the school. These areas align closely with current national expectations and upcoming Ofsted framework shifts.

In relation to whole-school improvement planning, the Headteacher confirmed that the School Development Plan (SDP) has been rag-rated to reflect progress since the previous term. A significant proportion of actions are rated **green**, with **amber** areas progressing as expected, and a small number of **red** actions requiring renewed pace. For example, ongoing work to improve **boys' writing**—identified as a red priority—has now been initiated and is expected to show movement in the next update.

13. Resources Committee Update

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Chair of Governors provided an overview of the recent Resources Committee meeting, referring to the minutes previously circulated to all governors.

The update confirmed that the minutes accurately reflected the discussions and financial monitoring undertaken by the Committee. No significant new issues had arisen since the last meeting, and governors noted that the school's current financial position remains stable.

- **Budget Approval Meeting:** Governors were reminded that the Committee will bring the final budget for approval at the meeting scheduled for **17 April**.

14. Curriculum Committee Update

The Committee Chair provided a summary of the recent Curriculum Committee meeting.

- **PSHE and RSE (Relationships & Sex Education):**
A review of current provision, statutory updates, and alignment with school values.
- **Mathematics:**
Curriculum sequencing, retrieval practice and challenge for higher-attaining pupils were discussed.
- **National Curriculum Changes:**
Governors were briefed on anticipated updates from the new government, with the school awaiting further detail before making any significant adjustments.
- **OPAL Rollout:**
The Committee completed a “deep dive” into the school's OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) provision. Governors noted strong progress, with no major concerns raised.

15. Pay Committee Update

The Pay Committee Chair provided an update on recent activity. The Committee has not met formally since the previous Full Governing Board meeting; however, governors were reminded that an additional, exceptional Pay Committee discussion had taken place to review a specific pay-related matter for a member of staff whose salary placement required adjustment. This was considered and agreed in accordance with policy. No individual names were recorded in the minutes.

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The Headteacher confirmed that the national performance management guidance has not changed and that updated policy documents will be circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting. Governors discussed the need to ensure the consistency of pay progression decisions, particularly for staff moving between scales or taking on hybrid leadership roles.

16. Governor Visits Update

Governors provided updates on a range of recent monitoring visits carried out across the school. All visits were aligned to school priorities and supported the Board's strategic oversight of curriculum, wellbeing and safeguarding.

Mental Health, Wellbeing and School Council Visit

Governors visited to observe a Mental Health Workshop delivered to members of the School Council. Pupils were highly engaged and spoke positively about their role as mental-health ambassadors and how they intended to share strategies with their peers. Governors also met with the pastoral lead to discuss the ongoing work towards the Gold Attachment Award, as well as the outreach and parenting programmes being offered to families, including sessions for Tamil and Korean communities.

Curriculum Visit – History

During the same visit cycle, governors met with the subject lead for History and reviewed books and planning. Evidence showed clear curriculum sequencing, strong scaffolding for pupils with SEND and PPG, and purposeful links to enrichment activities such as the Hampton Court Palace visit in Year 5.

Year 3 Visit

A governor visited Year 3 and observed a range of lessons including maths, preparation for an assembly, and history. The visit included scrutiny of pupils' books and discussions with staff about consistency of retrieval practice, challenge tasks and curriculum delivery. Feedback from staff was positive, and governors were assured that pupils were settling well in their new building following earlier transition challenges.

Health & Safety and Acorns Provision Visit

Governors conducted a joint visit involving Acorns, meeting with staff and reviewing the environment and safeguarding arrangements. This included a walk-through of areas affected by building-related issues previously raised at the FGB. Updates were provided by the site manager, including progress on minor defects and areas requiring follow-up. These findings will be fed into the next Health & Safety review cycle.

Documentation and Reporting

Governors reiterated the need for all visit reports to be uploaded to **SharePoint** and then onto **Governor Hub**, following the standardised templates developed by the Working Party.

Actions

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- **Governors** to upload all visit reports to SharePoint and Governor Hub using the agreed template.

17. Governors Impact

Governors provide support across operational and strategic areas. Securing a practical policy review mechanism; adopting a robust Code of Conduct; and focusing safeguarding attention on playground safety and gate security, are all examples of impact. Through visits, governors gather feedback from staff and pupils to ensure curriculum continuity.

18. Staff Recognition

The Head Teacher to send recommendations to the Chair of Governors.

19. Agenda Items for Future Governing Board Meetings

Governors proposed the following items for inclusion at the next Full Governing Board meeting:

- **Headteacher's Full Report**, including updates on safeguarding, data, staffing and progress towards SDP priorities.
- **SIP Report**, following the scheduled SIP visit on 22 April.
- **Building Works and Snagging Update**, including progress on ventilation, balcony access, security issues, and any responses to the governors' escalation letter.
- **Policy Approvals**, continuing the cycle of SharePoint consultation and Governor Hub sign-off.
- **Training and Governor Development**, as a standing item.
- **Committee Updates** (Resources, Curriculum and Pay).

Dates of Next FGB Meetings

Wednesday 10 June 2026