**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 21st September 2017 at 7.30pm at Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Present**

Kay Blayney, Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke (until 9.05pm), Roger Lilley, Julia Margretts, Ken Ong, Alex Pearson, Mitali Peckham (from 7.55pm), Sue Smith and Shelly Thake

In attendance by invitation: Marisol Basilio

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

Apologies: Ross Sargent

Absent: Mick Patel

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Election of the Chair of the Governing Body for the Academic Year 2017-2018** |  |
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|  | It was agreed unanimously to elect Julia Margretts as the Chair of the Governing Body for the academic year 2017-2018. |  |
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| **2.** | **Election of the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body for the Academic Year 2017-2018** |  |
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|  | It was agreed unanimously to elect Ken Ong as the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body for the academic year 2017-2018. |  |
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| **3.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |  |
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|  | Everyone welcomed Kay Blayney, a new co-opted governor who was Programme Manager for the Cambridge Early Years Teaching School (CEYTS). Julia introduced Marisol Basilio, a researcher at the Faculty of Education who was based in the Centre for Research on Play in Education, Development and Learning (PEDAL). Marisol would be attending Governing Body meetings when able to do so during the coming year, with a view to becoming a co-opted governor in September 2018. Julia reported that Anne Rigby would be also attending some Governing Body meetings. Anne was keen to volunteer and to develop volunteering at Homerton and to act as a link with Governors. |  |
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|  | Apologies for absence were received from Anne Rigby and Ross Sargent. |  |
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| **4.** | **Declarations of Interest** |  |
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|  | There were no declarations of interest. |  |
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| **5.** | **Minutes of 6th July 2017** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 6th July 2017 were approved as a correct record. |  |
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| **6.** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 6th July 2017** |  |
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| **a)** | **Graffiti** – Roy had managed to clean the graffiti off the passageway wall and no new graffiti had appeared. |  |
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| **b)** | **Admissions** – Shelly agreed to help publicise the availability of Homerton nursery places at Addenbrooke’s and at AstraZeneca. All Governors noted that Homerton would continue to seek to fill all available places, particularly in the lead-up to census day on 5th October 2017. | **Shelly** |
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| **c)** | **Heidi Allen** – Julia reported that she had been in contact with Heidi Allen MP, who was supportive of Homerton and the services the Centre offered. |  |
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| **d)** | **Artwork for outdoor area and alleyway** – Alex noted that there had not yet been time to progress this. |  |
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| **e)** | **Lunch hour charges** – Sue reported that the first invoices for lunch hour charges for children accessing their 15 hours over 2.5 days were just being sent out. A small number of parents had changed their sessions to avoid incurring charges. |  |
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| **f)** | **Policy on safeguarding and child protection** – This had been circulated to all Governors. Julia would finalise the formatting and then sign a copy with Alex. | **Julia/****Alex** |
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| **7.** | **Remaining Governor Vacancies** |  |
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|  | Governors noted that there remained two vacancies on the Governing Body, one for a parent governor and one for a co-opted governor. A parent governor election process would be run, starting on 9th October 2017. Alex and other Governors agreed to approach parents to encourage them to stand. Julia reported that she was in contact with Lindsay Fournier, who might agree to take up the co-opted governor place. | **Alex/All****Julia** |
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| **8.** | **Standing Orders** |  |
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|  | Governors received the Governing Body’s Standing Orders. One amendment was proposed, to publish Governing Body minutes on Homerton’s website as well as making paper copies available in the Centre. It was agreed unanimously | **Gwyneth** |
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|  |  To adopt the Standing Orders, subject to the above amendment. |  |
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|  | [Mitali arrived at 7.55pm.] |  |
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| **9.** | **Declaration of Pecuniary Interests** |  |
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|  | Gwyneth reminded all Governors of the need to complete a fresh declaration of pecuniary interests form for the start of the new school year. She circulated paper copies of the updated form at the meeting and all Governors present completed them. Gwyneth would chase up forms from those Governors not present. | **Gwyneth** |
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| **10.** | **Committee Memberships** |  |
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|  | Committee memberships were reviewed and the following appointments were agreed. Committee Chairs would be appointed at the Committees’ first meetings. |  |
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| **a)** | **Curriculum Committee** – Alex, Kate, Kay, Mitali, Ross and Sophie; Marisol would also attend meetings when she could |  |
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| **b)** | **Resources Committee** – Alex, Julia, Mick, Roger, Shelly and Sue |  |
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| **c)** | **Joint Children’s Centre Committee** – Julia and Ken, with Alex in attendance |  |
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| **d)** | **Children’s Centre Advisory Board** – As this had not met for some time, no appointments were made |  |
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| **e)** | **Pay Committee** – Julia, Roger and Shelly |  |
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| **f)** | **Appeals Committee** – Ken, plus others as appropriate |  |
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| **11.** | **Appointment of Lead Governors** |  |
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|  | Lead governors were appointed as set out below: |  |
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| **a)** | **Child Protection and Safeguarding** – Ken  |  |
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| **b)** | **Special Educational Needs and Disability/Use of the Pupil Premium** – Roger |  |
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| **c)** | **Diversity and Equal Opportunities** – Sophie |  |
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| **d)** | **Health and Safety** – Mick |  |
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| **e)** | **Headteacher’s Performance Management** (Chair and one governor) – Julia and Shelly |  |
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| **f)** | **Teaching School Link Governor** (member of Curriculum Committee) – Kay |  |
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| **g)** | **The Nest and Owlets** – Kate |  |
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| **12.** | **Governor Code of Practice** |  |
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|  | Governors received the Governor Code of Practice. No amendments were proposed. It was agreed unanimously |  |
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|  | To adopt the Governor Code of Practice for 2017-2018. |  |
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| **13.** | **Terms of Reference for Curriculum and Resources Committees** |  |
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|  | It was agreed unanimously to adopt the terms of reference for the Curriculum and Resources Committees. |  |
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|  | Committee members agreed to liaise to set the first Committee meeting dates of the school year, ideally before half-term; and to set dates for the rest of the year at their first meetings. Committee Chairs were asked to send these to Gwyneth, who would update the full meetings schedule and circulate it to all Governors. | **All****Gwyneth** |
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| **14.** | **Proposed Dates for Meetings of the Governing Body for 2017-2018** |  |
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|  | Proposed dates for meetings of the Governing Body for 2017-2018 were agreed, as set out below. **It was agreed to move the start time of all meetings forward to 7.00pm**. | **Gwyneth/****All** |
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|  | * Tuesday 5th December 2017
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|  | * Thursday 8th February 2018
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|  | * Thursday 22nd March 2018
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|  | * Thursday 26th April 2018
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|  | * Tuesday 10th July 2018.
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| **15.** | **Governor Development and Training** |  |
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|  | At the last Governing Body meeting, Governors had recorded on Post It notes their ideas of what the Governing Body did well and what might make it even better. A summary of these ideas had been circulated as an appendix to the minutes. Julia noted that two key themes had emerged that might appropriately be addressed through training sessions: |  |
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|  | * The role of a Governor
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|  | * The Ofsted framework.
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|  | Governors agreed that Julia and Alex should liaise to arrange half-hour training sessions on each of these themes at the beginning of two Governing Body meetings in the coming year. | **Julia/****Alex** |
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|  | Julia noted that induction of new Governors had also been identified as an issue. Curriculum Committee had considered an Induction Policy last year and this had been amended to include Governors. Julia would be reviewing Kay’s experience of induction as a new governor with her. Julia, Shelly and Gwyneth agreed to work together further to improve the induction arrangements for new Governors. | **Julia/****Shelly/****Gwyneth** |
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|  | Shelly also offered to help to improve Homerton’s communication with parents. She suggested that it would be useful to develop a communication plan covering the whole of the school year, to ensure timely communication and in particular to help families to prepare for forthcoming events or changes. Alex agreed to liaise with Shelly on this. | **Alex/****Shelly** |
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| **16.** | **Headteacher’s Report** |  |
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|  | Alex briefed governors on four reports circulated with the agenda: |  |
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| **a)** | **Nursery School Assessment Data 2016-2017** – Alex presented data on the progress made by children in the nursery school last year against the three prime areas of PSED, physical development and communication and language. Governors noted that the baseline data gathered on children’s entry had been lower than for previous years, primarily because many children had been new to English. The exit data had also been lower than previous years. However, the figures still showed excellent percentage increases in the numbers of children working at or above age-related expectations between the beginning and end of the school year, 20% or more across all areas. |  |
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|  | Progress made by children in The Nest had been similar to the previous year’s. |  |
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|  | Governors commented that in addition to EAL, gender also seemed to be relevant to children’s progress, and whether they were summer-born. On gender, Alex and Mitali explained that the criteria selected for assessment tended to favour girls, who typically might sit for longer than boys and might develop fine motor skills earlier, enabling them to hold a pencil correctly and to form shapes sooner. |  |
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|  | Specific support was offered to families with children who were working below age-related expectations. This included an EAL teaching assistant, who worked with children 1:1 or in small groups; and suggestions to parents of what they could do at home, including targets set for parents at the February parent consultation meetings. |  |
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|  | Marisol offered to prepare visual interpretations of the data, which could aid comparisons with previous cohorts and could also help to illustrate the extent to which factors such as EAL were important. | **Marisol** |
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| **b)** | **Early Years Pupil Premium** – Alex presented an anonymised report on outcomes for children in receipt of the EYPP during 2016-2017. 91% left at or above age-related expectations. The majority of the children had been with Homerton as funded 2 year olds, showing the value of being able to work with them for two years. |  |
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|  | Governors commented that two children had not progressed at all. Alex noted that these children had identified special educational needs; also that the bands used for assessment were very broad and that they had made some progress within their bands. |  |
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| **c)** | **Centre Development Plan** – Alex presented the Centre Development Plan for 2017-2018 and discussed its aims and objectives with Governors. Governors noted that the second page of this document had been circulated in error and should be ignored. Governors discussed the following points: |  |
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|  | * Under Children’s Progress, Governors noted that for the first time this year, a baseline assessment of maths and literacy would be made for nursery children in the second half of the autumn term. This had been identified as good practice through Ofsted inspections at other nursery schools. Maths would be a particular focus for the coming year.
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|  | * Under Teaching and Learning, Governors noted that there was a new class of 2 year olds, increasing the total number of 2 year old places from 12 to 24, with 47 children accessing this provision across the week. All places were filled and staff were working flexibly across both rooms. The 2 year olds were still settling but the nursery seemed very settled already, with children who had moved from The Nest to nursery already well established.
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|  | Governors commented that the settling-in process seemed very gradual and questioned whether it might be difficult or even off-putting for working parents. Alex explained that the process was already a week shorter this year than it had been in previous years. Children of working parents were prioritised. Mitali also emphasised the importance of effective settling in, to avoid longer-term problems. Governors asked whether it might be possible to expedite the process by using afternoon sessions for settling as well as mornings. They also suggested that children who had previously attended The Nest and were already familiar with Homerton could be settled in more rapidly. Governors agreed that these issues should be considered further by the Curriculum Committee. | **Curriculum Committee** |
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|  | * Under Governance, Governors noted that succession planning and induction were in hand. Greater focus was needed on Governor visits and reports, which had previously been led by Helen Bradford through the Curriculum Committee. Helen had prepared an excellent template for Governors’ visit reports. For social and fund-raising events, it was noted that Ross had agreed to co-ordinate parent governors. The Really Wheelie event had been very successful, raising about £1,000. A bingo evening and a ‘danceathon’ were suggested. Governors noted that up to £5,000 could be paid into the School Fund in one year without it needing to be registered with the Charity Commission. It was suggested that parents could be encouraged to get involved at Homerton via previous parents’ testimonials on the website, describing activities they had done with the children such as cooking and reading.
 | **Ross/****Parent Governors****Alex** |
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| **d)** | **Staffing and Nursery Cohort for 2017** – Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * Homerton had two ITT trainees this year, one in East and one in West. Both were settling well. Two members of staff would be leaving, one to go on maternity leave and the other to join her husband at his posting away from Cambridge. Three members of staff would be working towards Level 2 or Level 3 NVQs during the coming year.
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|  | Governors asked whether Homerton could take on apprentices as a cost-effective way of recruiting and developing staff. It was suggested that Alex could discuss this with Rikke Waldau, Head at The Fields Children’s Centre, where three apprentices were currently employed. Sue Smith noted that schools were receiving conflicting advice from EPM on the cost-effectiveness of employing apprentices. Kay noted that if the Teaching School were to become an accredited apprenticeship provider, then this would be very beneficial for the nurseries. |  |
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|  | * 77 out of 95 places in the nursery had been filled. This was just over 80%; the budget had been based on 80% occupancy. Some families were still being shown round. Spaces were mainly in East Blue and South a.m.
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|  | Governors asked whether Homerton had had to turn away any families requesting the 30 hours extended offer. Alex reported that this was just starting to happen. Governors suggested that as well as the dedicated 30 hours class, 30 hours places could be offered by placing children in both East Red and East Blue to achieve a full week. It was noted that at present, this could generate one extra place. Alex reminded Governors that delivering the 30 hours offer was financially challenging, since Homerton received only £4.79 an hour for each child instead of £6.50. She suggested that the Government would need to review the offer nationally, as it would not take off if it was not financially viable. Governors also noted that families could access the 30 hours across two providers; Alex confirmed that she had suggested this as a possible solution for one family. |  |
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|  | It was agreed that Resources Committee should review in more detail the demand, capacity and viability issues relating to 30 hour places. | **Resources Committee** |
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|  | * Late Owlets was filling. This session for children from both The Nest and the nursery ran from 3.45pm to 5.45pm. Staffing for this session was being organised as efficiently as possible, meeting both the need for appropriately qualified staff to be present and the differing staffing ratios required for the different age groups.
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| **17.** | **Key Issues from the Teaching School** |  |
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|  | Kay updated Governors on this year’s ITT (Initial Teacher Training) intake. She noted that the previous year’s intake of 13 had been exceptional, including a number of in-house applicants who already had Level 3 NVQs. This year’s intake was smaller: the initial 9 had fallen to 7 after one trainee had deferred and another had withdrawn on his first day, on the basis that he did not want to work in Early Years. The 7 trainees remaining were settling in well and showing high levels of commitment. |  |
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|  | Kay set out her aims for the Teaching School for the coming year, to place it at the forefront of Early Years training. The training on offer was excellent with an outstanding facilitator this year, Helen Moylett, author of *Development Matters in the EYFS.* The overall programme had been developed in partnership with CREC in Birmingham. The SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training) programme had received the first part of its Ofsted inspection, which had gone very well; the second part would take place in the autumn, when the NQTs were established in their schools. Places for CEYTS training sessions were now being marketed to partner schools and to the local authority. Other Teaching Schools were finding Early Years to be their weak area and were very impressed with what the CEYTS was achieving. |  |
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|  | Alex reported that the recent local authority Governors’ Briefing had advised that in future all teacher training money would be paid to the SCITTs, not to university providers. |  |
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|  | Kay commented on the need for strategic and effective bidding for funding, working jointly with other agencies when appropriate. A recent bid for funding for a bespoke NQT programme had not been successful, possibly because a CEYTS representative had not been present at relevant meetings. The pace of development was rapid and the Teaching School needed to keep up. Governors noted that the NQT programme would still go ahead. |  |
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|  | Governors also noted that work was continuing to acquire charitable Trust status for the Teaching School, which would enable it to bid for more external funding. This work was being led by Ysanne Heald, who chaired the Teaching School meetings and sat on the School Improvement Board, and Amanda Bannister, the Head at Colleges. Governors would be involved before a final decision was taken. |  |
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| **18.** | **Key Issues from the Children’s Centre** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meetings of the Joint Children’s Centre Committee held on 4th July 2017 and 17th July 2017 were received. There had also been a meeting on 8th September 2017. |  |
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|  | Julia updated Governors on the local authority’s consultation on the future of children’s centres in Cambridgeshire, which had been published since the last Governing Body meeting. The consultation document proposed the ‘redesignation or closure’ of the Children’s Centre based at Homerton and Fawcett (the South Cambridge Children’s Centre). |  |
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|  | The closing date for the consultation was 22nd September 2017 and Julia had been working hard to prepare a response, the latest version of which she had circulated that afternoon. She had also been encouraging others to respond, including local clergy. With Governors’ agreement, she would submit Homerton’s response to meet the deadline and would convert it into a letter to send to County Council members and senior officers. |  |
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|  | [Kate left the meeting at 9.05pm.] |  |
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|  | Governors thanked Julia for all of her efforts and made the following comments: |  |
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|  | * Welcomed the commentary from a Homerton parent who was a statistician based at the University about the poor methodology of the consultation questionnaire. He had stated that some of the questions were so misleading that any conclusions drawn from them were effectively meaningless. Governors asked Julia to refer to this commentary in her letter and to attach it in full as an appendix. Julia confirmed that the parent was happy to be named, Paul Fannon. Marisol also expressed professional concerns about the survey methodology and agreed to send Julia her own comments in time for the deadline.
 | **Marisol** |
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|  | * Noted that Julia was planning to send the letter to every member of the Children and Young People Committee individually. Gwyneth suggested that there was also a single e-mail address that went to all County Councillors, which could be obtained from Democratic Services.
 | **Julia** |
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|  | * Noted that Theresa Leavy and Helen Freeman had asked to visit the Children’s Centre the following week to meet with Anne Kent and Claire Brackley. The local authority seemed to recognise that a children’s centre-style presence was needed in this part of Cambridge, but were seeking to deliver it as cheaply as possible. If the South Cambridge Children’s Centre were to close, existing Children’s Centre staff would be TUPE-transferred to the local authority. The local authority would run an internal selection process for management and administrative roles. They were saying that they would try to avoid redundancies, but it was unclear how this would be achieved, given the surplus capacity that would be created if a number of children’s centres were to close. Shelly offered to advise Alex on personnel implications, including TUPE.
 | **Shelly** |
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|  | Mitali advised Governors of a message she had received from Felicity Higginson, asking about the continuing viability of Homerton’s nursery school and 2 year old provision if the Children’s Centre were to close. Julia noted that there would be a financial impact for Homerton’s budget, possibly approximately £30,000. |  |
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|  | Felicity had offered to attend and speak at the County Council Committee meeting on 10th October 2017, when the outcome of the consultation would be considered; and had also questioned what messages should be relayed to parents at this stage. Mitali explained that some parents had been concerned that the whole of the Homerton Early Years Centre might be closing. Governors noted that this misunderstanding was already being addressed on the website and could also be covered in the next newsletter. However, more detailed communication on the future of the Children’s Centre should wait until there was greater certainty and until staff knew what the impact on their roles would be. | **Alex** |
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|  | Governors suggested that given the confusion about the future of the wider Centre and the continuing availability of places in the nursery, it might be helpful to display a banner advertising the nursery’s ‘excellent’ Ofsted and the availability of places. Governors suggested that this could be displayed in a prominent location, possibly on a fence at a road junction if a supportive family or friend of the Centre would agree. Marisol suggested that places and availability should be set out on the Centre’s website such that the information could easily be shared on social media. | **Alex/Sue** |
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| **19.** | **Safeguarding** – no issues to report. |  |
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| **20.** | **Appointment of Head of Centre** |  |
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|  | Julia reported that a working group consisting of Alex, Sue, Shelly, Roger and herself had been in email contact and had considered a range of options for the future leadership of the Centre. Given the uncertainty over both the Children’s Centre and future funding for maintained nursery schools, the working group had agreed to ask Alex to take on the role of Acting Head for the whole of the coming school year. Alex had agreed to do this and the arrangements had been confirmed with the local authority. |  |
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|  | Governors thanked Alex for her willingness to take on this role and also congratulated her and all staff on an excellent start to the new school year. |  |
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|  | Mitali noted that the previous Head had been supported by Alex as Assistant Head; Alex was now effectively covering both roles herself and this should be recognised. Governors commented on the need for roles and responsibilities to be shared with other staff where possible. It was noted that arrangements were already in place to clarify who was in charge in Alex’s absence. |  |
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|  | Governors agreed that Alex’s role and workload and the senior leadership arrangements would be kept under review by the Resources Committee. | **Resources Committee** |
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| **21.** | **Budgetary Control Report** |  |
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|  | Sue presented the budgetary control report for August 2017. She noted that funding was being sent to the Centre differently than in previous years and she needed some time to make sense of this: the September budgetary control report would be more up to date. Janet Jallow, the local authority financial adviser, would be visiting Homerton on 29th September 2017 to help with the update. Governors asked for the September budgetary control report to be brought to the Resources Committee when available. | **Sue** |
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|  | Sue advised Governors of an issue that had arisen relating to a child in The Nest, who would be turning 3 this term and whose parents had already received their code for the 30 hours extended offer. This situation had not been anticipated when planning Homerton’s 30 hours offer. There was not room for the child in the 30 hours class; but there was a risk that the family would leave Homerton if the 30 hours request could not be met. |  |
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|  | Alex noted that children in this situation could potentially access their 30 hours in The Nest, but there would be a funding issue, as Homerton would receive only £4.79 an hour for these children instead of £6.50. It had previously been agreed that Homerton would offer only one 30 hours class, because of the financial loss that would otherwise be incurred. |  |
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|  | Governors asked staff not to make any immediate decision but to model the likely numbers of children who would turn 3 whilst in The Nest and whose parents would wish to access the 30 hours; and to bring numbers and costs to Resources Committee, to enable options to be considered in more detail. | **Alex/****Sue/****Resources Committee** |
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| **22.** | **Any Other Urgent Matters** |  |
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| **a)** | **Governing Body papers for staff –** Mitali reported a request from staff to have sight of Governing Body agendas before meetings, to enable them to ask the staff Governors to raise issues at meetings when appropriate. It was noted that Governing Body papers and meetings were not open to the public; however, it was agreed that the agenda front page could be shared with staff before meetings, which would enable them to see the issues due to be discussed. It had been agreed earlier in the meeting to publish minutes on the website. Alex agreed to advise staff ofthis. | **Mitali****Alex** |
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| **23.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
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|  | The next Governing Body meeting would be held on Tuesday 5th December 2017, starting at **7.00pm.** |  |
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|  | The meeting ended at 9.45 p.m. |  |