**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 22nd March 2018 at 7.00pm at**

**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Present**

Kay Blayney, Sophie Bryce, Roger Lilley, Julia Margretts, Ken Ong, Alex Pearson, Mitali Peckham (from 8.25pm) and Sue Smith

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |  |
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|  | Apologies for absence were received from Rinchen Ato, Kate Daenke, Mick Patel, Ross Sargent and Shelly Thake. |  |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest** |  |
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|  | There were no declarations of interest. |  |
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| **3.** | **Minutes of 8th February 2018** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 8th February 2018 were approved as a correct record. |  |
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| **4.** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 8th February 2018** |  |
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| **a)** | **‘Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings’** – Following on from the Ofsted training session at the previous meeting, Julia passed a copy of this document to Ken as Lead Governor for Safeguarding. |  |
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|  | All other matters arising were covered on the agenda. |  |
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| **5.** | **Head of Centre Appointment** |  |
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|  | Julia reported the Head of Centre interview panel, comprising Roger, Shelly and herself and supported by a local authority representative, had met on 20th March 2018 and had interviewed Alex for the Head of Centre post. The panel had been impressed with Alex’s positive attitude and her comprehensive presentation and had agreed unanimously to recommend to the Governing Body that she be appointed as Head of Centre. The Governing Body also agreed unanimously that Alex should be appointed as Head of Centre with effect from 1st September 2018. |  |
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|  | [Alex left the meeting whilst the appointment was discussed. As the meeting became inquorate when she left the meeting, the decision to appoint was formally ratified later in the meeting, when Mitali arrived and the meeting became quorate without including Alex – see Minute 13 below.] |  |
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|  | Alex returned to the meeting and confirmed her acceptance of the post. Governors offered her their congratulations. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that as there would be no Deputy Head, arrangements were being made to ensure support for Alex as Head. These included an extra half-day to be worked weekly by Mitali from the summer term, the cost of which could be met within the current budget; and a schedule clearly identifying who was in charge in Alex’s absence, namely the most senior teacher present or Sue Smith. |  |
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| **6.** | **Governor Recruitment** |  |
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|  | Gwyneth reminded Governors of the continuing vacancy on the Governing Body for a co-opted Governor. All Governors were encouraged to identify and approach possible candidates. | **All Governors** |
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| **7.** | **Head’s Report** |  |
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|  | Alex briefed Governors on the following issues: |  |
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| **a)** | **Admissions** –The nursery school would be full from April and the Nest was being filled as children moved up. Nursery school places were being offered for September both to children in the Nest and to children currently not at Homerton. |  |
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|  | Alex sought Governors’ views on an admissions issue for September. Some families who were not eligible for the 30 hours, because their income was too high or in one case because of special guardianship arrangements, were still seeking 30 hours of provision and were willing to pay for the 15 hours that would not be free. Alex asked Governors whether these children should be admitted to the 30 hours class or whether the 30 hours class should be exclusively for children whose families were eligible for the 30 hours offer. Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * It was proposed to offer one class with 24 places for 30-hour children from September, as had been done in the current year. |  |
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|  | * There was no requirement for Homerton to offer a specific number of 30-hour places. |  |
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|  | * There were currently 4 spaces left in the September 30-hour class and a comparable number of families wanting to pay to access it. Overall there was a shortage of 30-hour provision in Cambridge and it would be possible to fill all 24 places with children eligible for the 30 hours offer. |  |
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|  | * In the current year some families had been offered 30-hour places but had then not received codes demonstrating their eligibility. In these cases they had paid for the second 15 hours. |  |
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|  | * Financially, Homerton’s income should be higher if some families part-paid to make use of the 30-hour class than if all the children in the class were eligible for the 30 hours offer. In the current year, one child who had been part-paying for a 30-hour place had proved hard to settle and had ended up not paying for the second half of the day. However, such a situation was unusual. |  |
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|  | Governors’ view was that Homerton should accept payment for the second 15 hours where appropriate; otherwise, families without codes were being discriminated against. This would be particularly unfortunate in the case of the special guardianship. | **Alex/Sue** |
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| **b)** | **Staffing** – Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * Alison Brazier had been due to return to Homerton from the Children’s Centre but would now be leaving to work as a nanny, after 18 years’ service. |  |
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|  | * Lorraine Lindsay, a lunchtime supervisor, would be leaving to have a baby and to move with her family to London. Homerton was short of lunchtime staff, who worked between 11.00 and 1.30, and would welcome suggestions from Governors of possible people. Days could be worked flexibly. | **All Governors** |
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|  | * Felicity Higginson would be reducing her hours from full-time to three days a week with effect from September. Confirmation of other possible changes was awaited before advertising for new staff; an update would be brought to the next Governing Body meeting. Kay noted that one or more of the current ITT students might be interested in part-time work from September. | **Alex** |
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| **c)** | **Children’s centre** – Messy Play sessions would be run in-house after April, led by Suzy Hughes and parent volunteers. The possibility of running a music group from September was also being discussed. Jo Maxwell, the Early Help District Manager for Cambridge City, had visited Alex that morning. It had been a positive meeting and Jo had been keen for Homerton to maintain contact with Claire Brackley in her new role as Early Help Assistant Manager. The County Council was still finalising staffing issues arising from the transfer of children’s centre functions. Jo Maxwell had offered to attend a staff meeting to give a presentation on what services could be accessed and how. |  |
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| **d)** | **Parent survey** – The results of the parent survey had generally been very positive. Many of the comments made had been about food, some of these contradictory. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that Homerton’s food was currently provided by Cambridgeshire Catering and Cleaning Services (CCS), which would be closed down by the local authority in December 2018. Homerton would need to decide whether to bring these services in-house or to bring in an external company such as Cucina or The Lunchtime Company. Kay noted that the meals at Trumpington Community College were very good and Alex agreed to find out who provided them. Part of the problem at Homerton was that the kitchen was so small, meaning that at least some meal elements needed to brought in ready-prepared or frozen. CCS would leave all of the catering equipment, but Homerton would take on liability for its maintenance. Alex was meeting relevant people, including CCS and Homerton’s dry goods supplier, and would establish what proportion of the costs currently paid were for staff salaries. Existing staff would be TUPE-transferred either to Homerton or to the new company: nothing would change for them other than their management. | **Alex** |
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| **e)** | **Events** – The Eggstravaganza had been a lovely event and the weather had been good. The Danceathon had also taken place and had raised £90. |  |
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| **f)** | **Teaching School** – Two successful bids would need to be delivered during the coming year, one on literacy and one on SEN. Alex and Louise would need to work a total of 18 days on the bids before the end of the year and would be paid £350 a day. However, not all of this would be profit for Homerton, as there would be some supply costs to backfill their roles. |  |
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|  | Kay reported that the Teaching School had been offered delivery of an apprenticeship programme. This was controversial, with CREC advising that the Teaching School not take it up. However, Kay was more optimistic that it could be a ground-breaking opportunity; she also emphasised that apprenticeships could help to promote social mobility. Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * Kay Blayney, Kay Dimelow and Amanda Bannister were in regular contact with Jane Warwick and Harriet Rhodes at the University of Cambridge’s Faculty of Education. The Teaching School had asked the Faculty not to go with another apprenticeship provider until Teaching School representatives had met Geoff Hayward, the Head of Faculty, to discuss this with him. |  |
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|  | * Risks would be lower if apprentices were staff already known to the Teaching School or recommended to them by other local schools. The Teaching School and nursery schools would interview possible candidates together as part of the selection process. |  |
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|  | * The financial arrangements for apprentices could be complicated. The Teaching School would have to pay apprentices as unqualified teachers but would be reimbursed with the apprenticeship levy and would receive payment for their training. |  |
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|  | * Apprentices would need to be properly supported and trained. Kay noted that a model of 80% teaching and 20% training was unlikely to be sufficient unless individuals were already very experienced. |  |
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|  | Kay noted that there were currently no ITT recruits to the Teaching School for September. Many potential primary teachers were instead being recruited to secondary maths or science teaching because of the bursaries on offer. There were no comparable incentives for primary or early years teaching. |  |
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| **g)** | **Data reporting** – A simpler data reporting system had been developed, with help from the local authority. The first iteration reflecting the autumn baseline had been circulated with the agenda. Children had just been assessed for the spring term and so the data would be updated shortly to reflect their progress. Governors commented that: |  |
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|  | * The baseline entry for boys’ communication and language was low, with 40.9% below age-related expectations |  |
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|  | * 7 of the 8 children entering the nursery school with identified special educational needs were boys. It was not certain whether this was because some special educational needs such as autistic spectrum disorders were more prevalent in boys or more easily diagnosed. |  |
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|  | Governors looked forward to receiving the next update to the data report. |  |
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| **h)** | **Budget** – The 2018/19 budget had just been received from the local authority. Homerton would receive the same lump sum as in the current year and would be funded at £4.79 an hour. However, rather than showing separate figures, a single lump sum had been recorded for both 2- and 3-year-olds, which was not helpful. |  |
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| **i)** | **Admissions to the Nest** – Alex presented an updated policy for admissions to the Nest. She explained that the paragraph on opening and closing the waiting list had been removed, as a rolling process for applications was now being used, which was working well. |  |
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|  | Governors endorsed the policy for admissions to the Nest as amended. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that families applying for a place in the Nest were not currently asked if they were also applying for a place elsewhere, as was done for families applying for a place in the nursery school. As this information could be useful, it was agreed to amend the application form for the Nest to include this question. | **Alex/Sue** |
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| **j)** | **Policy review** – The SEN and Critical Incident Policies would be brought to the next Governing Body meeting. | **Alex** |
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| **k)** | **Centre Development Plan** – The Centre Development Plan had been updated, with more items moved from yellow to green and all actions on track. |  |
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|  | Governors thanked Sophie for leading an EAL session at a recent staff meeting. |  |
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| **8.** | **Key Issues from Curriculum Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum Committee held on 26th February 2018 were received. Kay highlighted the following points: |  |
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|  | * The Committee had been reviewing the Maths policy, assisted by Mitali. Once work on the Maths policy was complete, attention would be turned to the literacy policy and a separate communications and language policy. Felicity would be involved in this work and Kay would also offer support. |  |
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|  | * Discussion of children’s use of apps on the Centre’s iPads was continuing. Homerton had received a useful visit from a member of staff at Sheringham School in Newham, a leader in this area. |  |
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|  | * One member of staff had taken part in Football Association training at Trumpington Park and other members of staff were attending training at Huntingdon and Histon. |  |
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|  | * The Committee had noted that if there was no ITT next year, the Teaching School could offer regular CPD (continuous professional development) training, which could be advertised on the local authority’s new website. |  |
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|  | * The Committee had discussed possible staff training on resilience: morale at Homerton was generally good but as funding reduced and staff were asked to do more, the pressure on them inevitably increased. |  |
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|  | The Curriculum Committee meeting scheduled for 26th March 2018 at 9.30am would not be taking place. Kay would canvass an alternative date. | **Kay** |
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| **9.** | **Update on the Children’s Centre** |  |
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|  | The last meeting of the Children’s Centre Joint Committee had taken place on 16th March 2018, prior to the formal transfer of children’s centre functions to the local authority on 1st April 2018. Governors noted the following points: |  |
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|  | * Claire Brackley had been appointed to one of the two Early Help Assistant Manager jobs in Cambridge City and Alex Davies, formerly Senior Family Worker at The Fields, had been appointed to the other. Rachel Currie had taken voluntary redundancy. The Children’s Centre Family Workers had all transferred to the local authority. Line management arrangements were being agreed for the Family Worker employed jointly with St Mary and St Michael’s; Governors noted that this model could in future be an option for joint working with St John’s. The two Business Support Assistants had found other posts, with Suzy Hughes returning to Homerton. |  |
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|  | * A van was coming on 23rd March 2018 to take Children’s Centre items to Fawcett. These items were expected predominantly to be files rather than equipment. Arrangements for phones, laptops and key fobs were still being clarified with Claire Brackley. Governors asked Sue to ensure that Homerton received a fair share of any surplus resources. It was proposed to use the vacated office in Homerton for teacher planning, with the current teacher planning room becoming a much-needed space for staff to work with children with SEN. | **Sue** |
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|  | * The Joint Committee had been due to receive the final children’s centre budget but the Trumpington Federation bursar had been unwell and it had not been possible to access the necessary information. Julia had challenged the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting in relation to the £5,000 to be paid to Homerton, but this sum had in fact already been transferred. There would be a short ‘wash-up’ period after 1st April 2018 enabling outstanding invoices relating to the children’s centre to be paid. |  |
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|  | * Claire Brackley was discussing with the local authority the future of a group that the South Cambridge Children’s Centre had run in west Cambridge, at Madingley Road. The University was keen for this group to continue. Alex noted that it would be time-consuming and complicated for Homerton to run this group and that it would not bring in additional income. |  |
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|  | * A lunch was being held the following day to mark Alison Brazier’s leaving and the transfer of the Family Workers. A presentation had been made to Claire Brackley at the end of the Joint Committee meeting. It was agreed that Julia would also write to Claire on behalf of Governors, thanking her for all of her hard work. It was noted that Claire still did not know where she would be based from 1st April 2018 but that it could be Fawcett. | **Julia** |
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|  | Governors asked whether there was any need for ongoing liaison with Fawcett on children’s centre issues. Alex noted that this should be covered by Claire Brackley’s appointment as EHAM, especially as she was also Homerton’s designated liaison officer. |  |
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| **10.** | **Key Issues from the Teaching School** |  |
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|  | These had been covered under Minute 7 f) above. |  |
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| **11.** | **Safeguarding** – no issues to report. |  |
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| **12.** | **Key Issues from Resources Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 8th March 2018 were received and the following issues discussed: |  |
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|  | * The 2018/19 budget had been received from the local authority after the Resources Committee meeting. The details had not yet been finalised, but Janet Jallow, the local authority financial adviser, had visited Homerton earlier in the week and it looked as if Homerton could break even without using carry forward in the coming year. Homerton would receive the same lump sum as in the previous year and the hourly rate would continue to be £4.79, although this was due to reduce to £4.04 from April 2019, or possibly April 2020: advice on this point differed. It was clear that the budget for years after 2018/19 would be more difficult. |  |
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|  | * Jonathan Lewis, the local authority’s new Service Director for Education, had invited all nursery school Chairs of Governors and Heads to a meeting on 16th April 2018 at 5.00pm and had already circulated an agenda. It was suggested that it would be useful for the Chairs and Heads to meet together beforehand to share thoughts and prepare. Julia and Alex agreed to try to arrange this. Governors noted that Jonathan Lewis had made it clear that there was no additional money available; however, his interest in the nursery schools was welcome. | **Julia/Alex** |
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|  | [Mitali joined the meeting at 8.25pm.] |  |
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| **13.** | **Head of Centre Appointment** |  |
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|  | As the meeting was now quorate without Alex, Governors revisited the Head of Centre decision in principle taken earlier in the meeting (Minute 5 above). It was agreed unanimously |  |
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|  | That Alex Pearson be appointed as Head of Centre with effect from 1st September 2018. |  |
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|  | Mitali asked for it to be recorded that a number of staff had approached her to say that they wholeheartedly supported Alex’s appointment and were glad that it could now be confirmed. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that Homerton was now the only one of the six Cambridgeshire nursery schools not to have a Deputy Head. Support for Alex had been discussed earlier in the meeting. It was also noted that there might be scope for the Teaching School to provide support, or for the nursery schools to share or borrow Deputy Heads. The other nursery schools were in greater financial difficulties than Homerton and would need to review their own positions. It was possible at the meeting on 16th April 2018 that Jonathan Lewis would propose federation of the nursery schools, as suggested by the Early Education review. It would be interesting to know what savings federation might be expected to achieve. Alex agreed to circulate the Early Education report to Governors. | **Alex** |
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| **14.** | **Any Other Urgent Matters** – none. |  |
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| **15.** | **Date of Next Meeting** –The next Governing Body meeting would be held on Thursday 26th April 2018 at 7.00pm. |  |
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|  | The meeting ended at 8.40pm. |  |