**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 26th April 2018 at 7.00pm at**

**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Present**

Rinchen Ato (from 7.35pm), Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke (from 7.25pm), Roger Lilley, Julia Margretts (Chair), Ken Ong, Alex Pearson (Head), Mitali Peckham (from 7.30pm) and Sue Smith

By invitation: Marisol Basilio

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |  |
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|  | Apologies for absence were received from Kay Blayney, Mick Patel, Ross Sargent and Shelly Thake. The meeting was not quorate at the beginning. |  |
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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 22nd March 2018** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 22nd March 2018 were approved as a correct record. |  |
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| **4.** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 22nd March 2018** |  |
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| **a)** | **Meeting with Jon Lewis, Service Director for Education** – Julia reported back on the meeting that had taken place on 16th April 2018 between Jon Lewis, the new Service Director for Education at the County Council, and nursery school Heads and Chairs. Jon Lewis had: |  |
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|  | * Listened carefully to Heads and Chairs and seemed supportive of early years
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|  | * Emphasised that there was no additional funding available
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|  | * Encouraged the nursery schools to adopt a more collegiate approach, sharing information on management, costs and charges
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|  | * Expressed a wish to set up a Countywide Early Years strategic planning group including representatives of the nursery schools, the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, the local authority and other stakeholders
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|  | * Encouraged nursery schools to lobby the Treasury on Early Years funding. He knew Liz Truss and would be seeking a meeting with her
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|  | * Had not mentioned federation, as some had anticipated.
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|  | All other matters arising were covered on the agenda. |  |
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| **5.** | **Governor Recruitment** |  |
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|  | Julia reminded Governors that there was currently one vacancy on the Governing Body for a co-opted governor. She would be standing down herself at the end of the academic year and Shelly had also expressed a wish to stand down by Christmas 2018 at the latest, bringing the total number of new co-opted governors needed to three. Governors discussed a number of possible new recruits and agreed to continue with their approaches. | **Ken/Julia/****All Governors** |
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|  | [Kate arrived at 7.25pm and the meeting became and remained quorate.] |  |
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| **6.** | **Head’s Report** |  |
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|  | Alex briefed Governors on the following issues: |  |
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| **a)** | **Children** – The nursery was full for the current term. Nursery places were being offered for September with 17 children identified for South, 23 for East Red, 22 for East Blue and 23 for West, an excellent position for this stage in the year. Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * East Red and Blue were full partly because of Governors’ decision at Resources Committee to offer some places in these classes to 30-hour children. A group of approximately 5 children would spend half the week in East Red and half in East Blue. Staff had been consulted on this measure and accepted it, noting that it was already practised in other nursery schools.
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|  | * As the mornings-only class, South was usually the least popular with parents, but was likely now to fill further given that it was the only class with several places remaining.
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|  | * The next step would be to offer places for 2 year olds for September 2018.
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|  | [Mitali arrived at 7.30pm.] |  |
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| **b)** | **Staffing** – Louise Yarrow, who was Homerton’s SENCo and who taught for three sessions a week in West Room, had just confirmed that she would be retiring at the end of the summer term. Louise had been at Homerton for 17 years and was very knowledgeable and experienced. Homerton would be advertising for a new teacher imminently and would also be reviewing its SENCo arrangements. These might include training up a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, employing Louise on a consultancy basis and involving Alex.  |  |
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|  | [Rinchen arrived at 7.35pm.] |  |
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| **c)** | **Events** – Governors noted a number of forthcoming events: the International Day on 28th April 2018; a writing workshop for parents to be run by Felicity Higginson and Helen Bradford on 3rd May 2018; a Really Wheelie event organised by Governors for 9th May 2018; and the Bear Hunt planned for 16th May 2018. |  |
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| **d)** | **CCS update** – Cambridgeshire Catering and Cleaning Services would be ceasing to trade at the end of the year. The local authority had asked Homerton to find alternative arrangements by September if possible, or the end of October at the latest. Alex reported that she had approached seven catering companies to see if they would be interested in providing lunches at Homerton. However, none was interested. This was partly because of the small number of meals needed, 50-60 per day, and partly because Homerton had a part-prep kitchen. |  |
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|  | Alex noted that she was still in discussion with Bridget Dore, a CCS employee who was considering setting up her own business when CCS ceased to trade. She would be confirming shortly whether she would be willing to cater at Homerton. |  |
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|  | Alex also reported that she had discussed this issue with Jon Lewis, Service Director for Education at the local authority. |  |
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|  | Governors thanked Alex for her efforts and made some further suggestions, including approaching Queen Ediths, Netherhall or The Fields to see if their caterers would be willing to prepare meals off-site and deliver them to Homerton. Governors noted that as a last resort, sandwiches instead of hot meals could be provided at lunchtime, but this would be avoided if at all possible. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that the difficulties in identifying possible catering providers meant that it was not possible for Homerton to comply with contract regulations, which required three quotations to be sought. Alex had written to the local authority requesting an exemption. Governors agreed that there was sufficient evidence of the impracticality of inviting competitive tenders and endorsed the request for an exemption. | **Alex** |
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| **e)** | **Children’s centre activities** – Messy Play had been running since Easter, led by Suzy Hughes and with support from Kate and Rinchen. Attendance was good, with Suzy suggesting a maximum capacity of 20 families. Governors asked Sue to confirm the insurance and first aid arrangements for the session, given the role of volunteers. | **Sue** |
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|  | Veronica Speirs would be running a music group on Fridays after half-term. She would be paying Homerton £10 an hour for room hire and would be charging parents £4 a session. Governors asked Sue also to confirm the insurance arrangements for this session. | **Sue** |
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|  | Claire Brackley, who was now one of the two Early Help Assistant Managers for Cambridge City, would shortly be confirming Homerton’s family worker support contact. The contact was likely to be someone already known to Homerton. |  |
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|  | Julia asked Sue to check whether there had been any funds remaining in the South Cambridge Children’s Centre budget at year-end and if so, to ensure that Homerton received a fair share. Very few physical resources had been transferred to Fawcett – two small filing cabinets and some papers. Homerton staff were considering how to make best use of the room vacated by Children’s Centre staff. It was proposed to use this room for staff members’ planning and preparation time, with their current room set aside for sessions with children with SEN. | **Sue** |
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| **f)** | **Teaching School** – Work was underway to deliver two bids, one on SEN and one on literacy. The Teaching School had also been successful with a third bid on auditing literacy in opportunity areas across the County. This work would be delivered over six weeks by Kay Dimelow, former Head of Huntingdon Nursery, and Kay Blayney and would bring in £13,000. |  |
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|  | CREC (the Centre for Research in Early Childhood), the Teaching School’s academic provider, had confirmed that they would be taking on four trainees next year. Kay Blayney was investigating the possibility of the Teaching School providing apprenticeships and was in touch with the University of Cambridge’s Faculty of Education about this. |  |
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| **7.** | **Curriculum Committee** |  |
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|  | It was noted that the next meeting of the Curriculum Committee would be held on Monday 14th May 2018 at 9.30am. |  |
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| **8.** | **Safeguarding** – There were no issues to report. Ken as Lead Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding agreed to arrange a visit with Alex during the coming term. The annual child monitoring report would also need to be submitted before the end of term. | **Ken/****Alex** |
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| **9.** | **Key Issues from Resources Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 19th April 2018 were received. Arising from the meeting, Governors discussed: |  |
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|  | * **Year-end declaration for 2017/18** – This showed carry forwards of £67,609 from the nursery school, £2,040 in capital and £92,556 for Owlets and the Nest.
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|  | Governors noted that these were all increases to the carry forwards from the previous year: in particular, the carry forward from 2016/17 for the nursery school had been approximately £54,000. Savings had been made by not employing an Assistant Head. Charging for the lunch hour had also made a significant difference. Parent governors reported that this charge was generally accepted by parents new to Homerton, but continued to be unpopular with those who had been with Homerton before its introduction. It was noted that some children were eligible for free school meals. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that in the coming year, it would be necessary to make up a shortfall in funding of £30,000 previously received for the Children’s Centre. |  |
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|  | * **2018/19 budget** – Sue reported that Janet Jallow, the local authority Schools Financial Adviser, had not been able to visit Homerton to assist with preparation of the 2018/19 budget. Sue had contacted her manager, Ray Byford, who had visited. Ray Byford had confirmed that the draft budget seemed reasonable and had added the 2017/18 carry forwards to the 2018/19 budget on the new system. However, neither the carry forwards nor subsequent work done by Sue had saved successfully, meaning that they were not reflected in the papers circulated to Governors. A colleague at the local authority had been unable to resolve the problem; Sue would continue to pursue this.
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|  | Governors thanked Sue for her efforts and expressed hope that the problem would soon be resolved. It was noted that apart from the carry forwards, the proposed changes would not significantly affect the budget for the coming year. |  |
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|  | School budget |  |
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|  | Governors noted that for the school budget, the predicted year-end carry forward from 2018/19 was £105,453. This figure was based on occupancy rates as in the current year, over 80%. Income included parental contributions of £57,000 for the lunch hour and some children paying in the 30-hour class. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that the forecasts for future years assumed that income would remain the same. However, national changes meant that this was unlikely to be the case. Homerton was likely to lose its lump sum, currently £120,000, from 2020/21. The hourly rate was also likely to reduce. Currently Homerton received £4.79 (nationally this figure was £4.63, but it was adjusted regionally); but PVIs received only £4.04 an hour. It was expected that the figure paid to nursery schools would reduce to achieve greater parity across the sector. Governors emphasised the need to continue to lobby for effective funding. There were already not enough 30-hour places available, as providers were not able to make them viable with the hourly rates paid. |  |
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|  | Nest and Owlets budget |  |
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|  | Governors noted that income totalling £222,098 was anticipated for 2018/19 across the Nest, late Owlets and holiday club. The carry forward from 2017/18 was £92,532 and this was expected to increase by a further £15,787 during the coming year. Governors noted that the carry forward from 2016/17 into 2017/18 had been £56,000. The Nest’s contribution to the Centre’s overall bills would be increased from 20% to 30% from 2018/19, to help offset the loss of income for the children’s centre. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that it would be necessary to review the salaries paid to staff in the Nest to achieve parity with the salaries paid to TAs in the nursery school. Staff in the Nest were currently paid under different arrangements, as childcare rather than early years employees. Now that Homerton had a single Ofsted registration as a provider for 2 to 5 year olds, the differential could not be justified, especially as some staff were deployed across both the Nest and the nursery. This issue had been discussed at Resources Committee and Sue had been investigating the cost of equalising salaries. |  |
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|  | Governors agreed in principle that all support staff at Homerton should be paid on the same pay scale. It was agreed that Sue would e-mail Governors the exact costs of implementing this once confirmed. | **Sue** |
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|  | Conclusion |  |
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|  | Governors noted that the 2018/19 budget was due to be submitted to the local authority by 3rd May 2018. It was agreed: |  |
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|  | * To approve the 2018/19 budget in principle, noting that some refinements were needed that it had not yet been possible, due to technical problems
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|  | * That Sue would circulate the final version of the 2018/19 budget to all Governors by e-mail prior to submission to the local authority.
 | **Sue** |
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| **10.** | **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy** |  |
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|  | Alex reported that only minor amendments had been made to the previous version of this policy. |  |
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|  | Governors agreed unanimously to endorse the SEND Policy as circulated with the agenda. | **Alex** |
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| **11.** | **Critical Incident and Lockdown Policies** |  |
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|  | Governors received two new policies covering the handling of critical incidents and the Centre’s lockdown procedure. Both policies had been recommended for approval by the Resources Committee. Governors: |  |
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|  | * Noted that the policies were based on models used by other nursery schools
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|  | * Noted that it was necessary to name three Governors who could be called in if a critical incident occurred. It was proposed to name Roger and Mick, since both lived in Holbrook Road, and Julia as Chair
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|  | * Questioned whether it was appropriate to practise the lockdown procedure with children once a year. After discussion Governors agreed that it would be useful to go through this with children present in the building, as long as it was managed sensitively. It was agreed to carry out a practice before the end of term.
 | **Alex/****Sue** |
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|  | Governors agreed unanimously to endorse the Critical Incident and Lockdown Policies as circulated with the agenda, subject to minor amendments to correct the number of caretakers and the spelling of Julia’s name. | **Alex** |
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| **12.** | **Any Other Urgent Matters** |  |
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| **a)** | **Head of Centre’s salary** – It was noted that this needed to be formally approved by Governors. It was agreed to do this at the next Governing Body meeting, once the figures had been finalised. | **Julia/****Sue** |
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| **b)** | **Maths Policy** – Mitali noted that the Maths Policy was ready for Governors’ approval and would be brought to the next Governing Body meeting. | **Mitali/****Gwyneth** |
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| **13.** | **Date of Next Meeting** –The next Governing Body meeting would be held on Tuesday 10th July 2018 at 7.00pm. |  |
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|  | The meeting ended at 8.30pm. |  |