

Homerton Early Years Centre

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7.00pm at

Homerton Early Years Centre

Present

Kay Blayney (until 8.30), Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke, Ken Ong (Chair), Mick Patel, Alex Pearson (Head) and Mitali Peckham

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

Governors' challenge highlighted in green

- | | Action |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence | |
| Apologies for absence were received from Tandy Harrison, Roger Lilley, Ross Sargent and Sue Smith; and from Sam Garyali, prospective governor. | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | |
| There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 3. Minutes of 12th February 2019 | |
| The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 12 th February 2019 were approved as a correct record. | |
| 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 12th February 2019 | |
| a) Prevent duty – All governors were encouraged to complete the online Prevent training. | All |
| b) Review of the website – Alex confirmed that this was underway but that she had not yet met with Rinchen. Ken noted that he would like to make some suggestions. | Alex/
Rinchen/
Ken |
| c) Lunch charge – It had recently been agreed to increase Homerton's lunch charge from £2.30 to £2.50 per day from September 2019. Governors noted that Morley had just raised their daily lunch charge from £2.30 to £2.40. Alex reported that one of Homerton's ovens had recently broken and would need to be replaced at a cost of £1,200, to be borne by the Centre whereas previously it would have been paid for by Cambridgeshire Catering Services. | |
| d) Brexit implications – Responding to a question raised at the previous meeting, Alex confirmed that no staff members' employment would be affected by Brexit. | |
| 5. Governor Recruitment | |
| Governors noted that there was one vacancy on the Governing Body for a co-opted Governor. Co-opted governors were appointed for their skills and experience and it was hoped in filling this vacancy to appoint a governor who would join the Resources Committee. | |
| Sam Garyali had attended the previous meeting as an observer and had subsequently submitted a personal statement setting out his background and experience, which had been circulated with the agenda. It was agreed unanimously: | |
| To appoint Sam Garyali as a co-opted governor and as a member of the Resources Committee. | |

It was agreed that Mick would notify Sam informally and Gwyneth would write to him with more information about his role. Ken would liaise with Roger as Chair of Resources Committee over the timing of meetings, to help make it possible for Sam to attend.

**Mick/
Gwyneth/
Ken**

6. Membership of Headteacher Appraisal Committee

Governors noted that the Headteacher Appraisal Committee currently comprised Ken, Roger and Kay. Roger had recently attended local authority training on Headteacher appraisals and Cambridgeshire's advice was that the Chair of Governors should not serve on the Appraisal Committee, to enable the Chair's advice to be sought in the case of disagreement.

It was agreed to ask Tandy if she would be willing to replace Ken as a member of the Headteacher Appraisal Committee.

Ken

7. Head's Report

Alex briefed Governors on the following issues:

- a) **Children** – The Centre was currently almost full. Places were being offered for September 2019 and the Centre was again expected to be full, with the exception of the South morning session. There was a waiting list for the Nest.
- b) **Staffing** – Staff health was generally better following the period of sickness before half-term. One lunchtime supervisor was leaving to become a teaching assistant at Morley. All Governors were asked to consider if they knew anyone who might be interested in becoming a lunchtime supervisor, or where the vacancy could be advertised.

Alex reported with sadness that Carol Ketteridge, a former long-serving member of staff, had died the previous week. Her funeral would be taking place on Monday 8th April 2019 at 11.30am at Linton Church. Kay offered to help provide cover to enable holiday club staff to attend.

Governors joined Alex in congratulating Bernie Cafferkey on her recent engagement.

- c) **Funding** – Government had recently confirmed that funding for maintained nursery schools would be kept at the same level until July 2020. However, at a recent meeting with nursery Heads, the local authority had advised that they were seeking to make savings of £1.3 million across Cambridgeshire's nursery schools. A further meeting for nursery schools' Chairs and Vice-Chairs had been arranged for Monday 1st April 2019 at 7.00pm at Histon. An update would be brought to the next Governing Body meeting.

Governors asked whether the local authority's proposals were intended to compensate for loss of nursery school funding after July 2020, or to achieve additional savings. Alex explained that both were possibilities, the latter especially as some Cambridgeshire nursery schools were running at a loss and as the County Council's SEND budget was substantially overspent. The situation was complicated by Brexit, which was causing delay to decisions on the long-term funding of maintained nursery schools.

- d) **Budget** – Work was beginning to build the budget for 2019/20. Proposals would be considered at the Resources Committee meeting on 4th April 2019 and Ray Byford, local authority Education Finance, would be visiting Alex and Sue on 5th April 2019 to look at closedown of this year's budget and preparations for the coming year. There would still be a good level of carry forward from previous years and it would be necessary to consider how and how much of this should be spent, for example on new carpets, given future uncertainties.

£13,222 had now been received from the Children's Centre carry forward. This would be used to replace the astroturf in the Nest garden and on the two hills in the nursery garden.

e) **Parents** – Parent consultations had recently been completed. The findings of the recent parents' survey had been circulated with the agenda. Governors discussed the following points:

- Online daily reporting – Some parents had suggested more daily reports of their children's activities or use of an online reporting tool such as Tapestry, which was used by some PVI providers. Alex had addressed this suggestion in a recent weekly newsletter, explaining that Homerton preferred to focus on spending time with the children. **Governors proposed other ways of ensuring that parents knew about their children's experiences:**

Alex

- Parents were always welcome to visit the Centre.
- Morley's Reception classes ran a weekly 'mystery story reader' session, when parents and carers were invited to come in and share a story with children at the end of the day; it was suggested that this could also be done at Homerton. DBS checks would not be needed as there would always be staff present as well.
- The plasma screen in the entrance was already used to show pictures of life at Homerton, often special events such as the recent Irish dancing. Governors suggested that the pictures could be updated more frequently and could show everyday as well as special events, e.g. lunchtime.
- Staff could be encouraged to make more informal use of the tablets in the classrooms to show parents pictures of what their children had been doing.

- Use of mobile phones – One parent had commented that they found the ban on using mobile phones inside the Centre frustrating and another had reported being 'told off' for using one. **Governors asked Alex to address this issue via the weekly newsletter, reminding all parents of the safeguarding considerations behind the ban and also the importance of parents focussing on their children at drop-off and pick-up time. Governors also asked Alex to consider different signage, possibly just a no phones symbol in some places or a 'this is a mobile-free zone' at the entrance.**

Alex

- How people found Homerton – The main ways that parents had reported of finding Homerton were word of mouth, through the local community and via the internet. **Governors emphasised the importance of a strong internet presence. One Governor noted that word of mouth was proving effective at Morley, where parents who had not sent their first children to Homerton were hearing good things about it at the school and deciding to send subsequent children.**

- Using the survey results – **Governors discussed whether the full results as presented at the meeting should be published on the website. Some governors felt that they presented an honest picture of life at Homerton and one that was overwhelmingly positive. Other governors felt that some parents might be surprised to see their comments, albeit made anonymously, published on the internet. Following discussion, it was agreed not to publish the current results but to ask parents as part of the July 'exit survey' of what Homerton had done for their children, whether they would be willing for comments made to be published. Consideration would then be given to asking again as part of the next spring term survey.**

Alex

Governors commended staff on the generally highly positive feedback received.

f) **Centre Development Plan** – Work on the Centre Development Plan was ongoing. There had been a useful staff training day on Anna Ephgrave's Planning in the Moment, motivating staff, and a further session would be held in May on creating appropriate environments.

- g) **SEND policy** – Alex presented the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, which had been updated by Bernie Cafferkey, Homerton’s SENCo, with consultancy support from Louise Yarrow.

Governors endorsed the Policy, subject to the replacement of ‘IEP’ with ‘Plan/Do/Review paperwork’ in the sixth bullet point under Class Teachers on page 3.

Alex/Mitali

The Policy would now be updated on the Centre’s website, together with the annual SEND information report.

- h) **Note of Early Years Improvement Adviser visit** – This had been circulated with the agenda. Governors noted that the focus of the visit had been Ofsted readiness. Homerton’s last inspection had been in May 2016 and inspections were carried out on a three-year cycle. The Centre would receive notification that its inspection was taking place the day before. Governors noted that Histon nursery school was currently being inspected.

Recommendations made by the Improvement Adviser had been addressed as follow:

- The relevant section of the Self-Evaluation Framework had been discussed by Curriculum Committee, with useful input from Governors. The Leadership section of the SEF would be discussed at the next meeting of Resources Committee. A staff meeting on the SEF would take place after Easter.
- Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) had been identified in Target Tracker.
- Policies were being updated on the website, including the SEND policy after this meeting.
- The suggestion that governors’ challenge was highlighted in the minutes was discussed. Governors agreed that this should be trialled for this meeting and then reviewed.

Gwyneth/
All

- i) **Morley tender** – The tender for nursery provision at the former Morley early years site was due to be reissued the following day. In view of the tender, Alex had requested a meeting with the local authority’s Sufficiency team, which was responsible for place planning. This would be taking place on 4th April 2019 at 10.30. Kay offered to attend.

Kay

Governors suggested that questions also be asked at this meeting about the proposed Worts Causeway development and nursery and school place planning to support this.

Alex

- j) **Data** – Alex and Mitali had received bespoke training on Target Tracker, the Centre’s data software.

Alex and Mitali led a session on data, comparing data for the autumn and spring terms for children in the nursery school and in the Nest. Three sets of sheets were circulated:

Attainment data (EYFS steps)

These sheets showed autumn baseline and spring progress data by the term in which children were born, autumn, spring or summer, for the nursery and the Nest. Governors observed that progress was being made in all three groups. Children born in the autumn term tended to join at a higher starting point but there was evidence that summer-born children were making accelerated progress to catch up, especially in the three prime areas of personal, social and emotional development; communication and language; and physical development. Governors noted that this was important because whilst term of birth could make a significant difference to progress at nursery age, once children entered Reception they would all be assessed equally against Early Learning Goals, irrespective of term of birth.

Governors asked whether those who joined at a relatively high level were also being challenged to progress. Alex explained that reports were available on individual children and that staff worked to ensure that children with a high starting point were also helped to develop.

Progress breakdown

The assessments underpinning these tables were based on broad age bands, for nursery age children 22-36 months, 30-50 months and 40-60 months; and assessments of whether within these bands children's progress was 'emerging', 'within expected levels' or 'secure' for the prime and specific areas of learning. Target Tracker, the software used to collate and manage data, had six steps of progression, so three of these, 1, 3 and 5, had not been used and were shown as zero entries.

Governors noted that good percentages of children were shown as making either 2, 4 or 6 or more steps of progress across the three prime areas and the two specific areas of literacy and maths.

Governors queried the yellow band showing no steps of progress, which included 21.8% for understanding, 21.8% for speaking, 27.6% for moving and handling and 23.0% for health and social care. Alex explained that staff had reviewed the individual children represented by these percentages. In most cases, they had been assessed as starting to progress, but not as having made sufficient progress to move up. Some of these children were already high achievers. Some were moving up in some areas but not in others; one child, for example, had already been achieving well in literacy and was currently making rapid progress in maths.

Governors commented that the children who should be causing greatest concern were those appearing to make no progress in any area. Alex explained that it was anticipated that the numbers of children showing no steps of progress would be markedly lower in the summer term.

Age related expectation summary reports

These showed progress in the prime areas from the autumn to the spring term for different groups of children in the nursery: boys and girls, those eligible for the Pupil Premium, those with EAL, those with SEND and post-LAC children.

Governors observed that most groups were showing a reduction in the percentage below age related expectation and an increase in the percentage at higher than age related expectation.

The exception to this was children eligible for the Pupil Premium, who were showing little progress. Governors asked how Pupil Premium was used to benefit these children. Alex explained that there was a weekly physical movement group, which also helped to develop listening and understanding. Those children who were not able to attend were supported through small group work with a teaching assistant. However, staff had noted that many of the children eligible for Pupil Premium also had SEND, meaning that they needed support for multiple vulnerabilities.

Governors also:

- Asked how it could be ensured that assessments of children's progress were made consistently. Alex accepted that this was a challenge, which was addressed by both internal moderation and moderation with other establishments including Morley and the Queen Emma cluster group.

- Asked whether staff were finding the new reports useful. Mitali explained that most were. She noted that a different format was used for staff and that they also had access to data for individual children.
- Commended the evidence of excellent progress being made in the Nest.
- Noted that further comparative data for the summer term would be presented to the last Governing Body meeting of the school year, in July.
- Thanked Mitali for her hard work to prepare the data and agreed to send any further questions to her.
- Alex tabled a summary of findings from the data, which is attached as an appendix to these minutes. The handouts tabled at the meeting would be added to the agenda papers on the website.

Gwyneth

8. Key Issues from Curriculum Committee

The minutes of the Curriculum Committee meeting held on 11th March 2019 were received. Arising from the meeting, Governors discussed the following points:

- **Visits** – Ross’s visit on children’s understanding of the world and physical play had been arranged for 13th May 2019. It was agreed that Kay would contact Marisol about the Literacy visit and would carry this out herself if Marisol was not able to take part. Sophie offered to undertake a visit if this would be helpful.
- **iPads** – The Centre’s use of iPads had been agreed and the Curriculum Committee had agreed that the current outdated equipment should be replaced. As Resources Committee had previously approved the expenditure, this purchase would now go ahead.

Kay/
Marisol

9. Safeguarding

As Safeguarding lead, Ken noted that there were no specific issues to report.

10. Best Value Statement

Governors endorsed the Best Value Statement as circulated with the agenda.

Sue

11. Any Other Urgent Matters

March against education funding cuts – Governors noted that St Matthew’s Primary School was organising a march against education funding cuts, which would start from Parkers Piece at 4.00pm on Monday 1st April 2019.

Information about Governors for the website – It was agreed to ask all Governors to submit 2-3 bullet points setting out their connection with Homerton and their relevant experience and expertise, for inclusion on the website.

Gwyneth/
All

12. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 2nd May 2019 at 7.00pm at Homerton.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.