

Homerton Early Years Centre

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 2nd May 2019 at 7.00pm at

Homerton Early Years Centre

Present

Kay Blayney, Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke, Sam Garyali, Roger Lilley, Ken Ong (Chair), Alex Pearson (Head), Ross Sargent and Sue Smith

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

Governors' challenge highlighted in green

- | | Action |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence | |
| Apologies for absence were received from Rinchen Ato, Tandy Harrison and Mitali Peckham. | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | |
| There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 3. Minutes of 26th March 2019 | |
| The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 26 th March 2019 were approved as a correct record. | |
| 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 26th March 2019 | |
| a) Format of the minutes – The highlighting in green in the minutes of governors' challenge was welcomed. It was agreed that this should continue. | Gwyneth |
| b) Review of the website – This action remained outstanding. | Rinchen/
Alex |
| c) Appointment of new governors to Resources Committee – Roger confirmed that he had been in touch with Sam to confirm his availability for Resources Committee meetings. | |
| d) Headteacher's Appraisal Committee – Following local authority advice that the Chair of Governors should not be on this Committee, Tandy had agreed to replace Ken as a member. Roger agreed to chair the Committee. He noted that the local authority also advised that there should be interim meetings of this Committee, in addition to its annual review meeting. | Roger |
| e) Use of mobiles – There had been no feedback following the reminder to parents that mobiles should not be used inside the Centre, other than thanks from one parent for reminding him that this was the policy. | |
| f) Information about governors – This had been published on the website. Governors were invited to send updates at any time. | |
| 5. Governors' Attendance at Training Events | |
| Governors' attendance at training events for 2018/19 to date was noted. | |
| 6. Head's Report | |
| Alex briefed governors on the following issues: | |

- a) **Astroturf** – The new astroturf had been laid in the garden over Easter and was being very well received. **Governors agreed to see it for themselves at the end of the meeting.**
- b) **Children** – All classes were full for September 2019 other than South morning, which was currently half-full. This session had historically been the hardest to fill and was usually full by October/November. Provision for 2 year olds was oversubscribed.
- c) **Morley tender** – The local authority tender for nursery provision from the former Morley Early Years base was due to be reissued shortly. Alex would circulate the document to governors when available. **Alex**

Alex reported that she had had a useful meeting with local authority Sufficiency colleagues and had sent a follow-up e-mail to them and to Jon Lewis, Service Director: Education, emphasising that the greatest need locally was for provision for 0-2 year olds. This had been reflected in the first tender document, which had stated that 0-2 provision was essential and 2-4 provision optional.

Governors had previously felt that Homerton should not tender, due in part to the wider uncertainty over funding for maintained nursery schools. **However, it was agreed to review the situation when the new tender was published.** It was unlikely that any new provision would be in place by September 2019.

- d) **Discussions with local authority about maintained nursery schools** – Alex updated governors on discussions with the local authority about the future of maintained nursery schools.

[This item is covered in more detail in the confidential minutes.]

- e) **International Day** – This would be taking place on Saturday 18th May 2019 from 12.30pm to 2.30pm.
- f) **Really Wheelie event on Wednesday 12th June 2019 and Wandlebury visits on Wednesday 26th and Friday 28th June 2019** – Governors were invited to help out with these events if they could. **All**
- g) **New parents' evening on Thursday 13th June 2019** – Kate and Rinchen had been asked to attend this session to tell new parents about the role of parent governors and to encourage new parents to get involved. **Kate/
Rinchen**

7. Key Issues from Curriculum Committee

The minutes of the Curriculum Committee meeting held on 24th April 2019 were received. Arising from the meeting, Governors discussed the following points:

- **Visits** – **Ross would be visiting on 13th May 2019 to look at Physical Development and Understanding of the World and would be assisted by his wife, Laura. Kay had been in touch with Marisol and Kay would now be carrying out the Literacy visit on 14th May 2019.**
- **Policies** – **The Committee had sought and received confirmation that all required policies were on the Centre's website.** Alex drew governors' attention to the central list of policies, which stated when each one was due for review and which person or group was responsible for doing this.

Mitali would be updating the Understanding the World policy before the governor visit on 13th May 2019. **Kate and Kay would be carrying out a visit on expressive arts in the autumn term and Mitali would also be updating this policy before their visit.**

- **Review of outside space** – Alex and Mitali had carried out a detailed review of the outside space and noted where repairs or improvements were needed. New wheeled toys were a particular need, which could be funded from money raised at the Really Wheelie event and possibly the International Day.
- **Teddy bears’ picnic** – It had been agreed not to run this event this year. Previously it had been held at lunchtime and had enabled families from morning and afternoon sessions to meet each other as part of their children’s transition to primary school. With most children now attending all day, a lunchtime session had become less relevant.
- **Community rooms at St John the Evangelist** – Kay reported that the community rooms at St John’s were being revamped, with greater emphasis to be placed on community outreach. There would be an opening event on 28th September 2019. Kay asked Homerton to consider having or sharing a stall at this event, as it would be a good opportunity to promote the Centre and its activities. The event would be attended by the Bishop of Ely, who was the Church of England’s official spokesman on education in the House of Lords. Kay also suggested that Homerton could in future consider using rooms at St John’s for events, if there was not sufficient space available in the Centre.

8. Key Issues from the Teaching School

Kay reported that:

- The Teaching School’s SEND project was currently a particular strength.
- She and Kay Dimelow had made another bid to the County Council’s Innovate and Cultivate Fund for work on Steps behaviour training.
- It had been suggested that the value of the Teaching School should be emphasised to the local authority as part of the discussions about the future of Cambridgeshire’s maintained nursery schools.
- More widely, Teaching Schools were unsettled, as it was possible that funding would end in March 2020 for those not delivering Initial Teacher Training. The Cambridge Early Years Teaching School was unique in the Cambridgeshire area as the only Teaching School focussing on early years, but still might in future need to become part of a larger hub.

9. Safeguarding

Alex reported that the Centre was currently working to support one family, with appropriate contacts and meetings in place.

10. Key Issues from Resources Committee

The minutes of the Resources Committee meetings held on 4th April 2019 and 25th April 2019 were received. Arising from the meetings, Governors discussed the following points:

Staffing structure – The Committee had recognised the need for Alex to have sufficient leadership time and support, not least to address issues such as those being raised by the local authority, by meeting with other Heads, lobbying Councillors and representing Homerton. Some changes to and enlargement of existing roles were therefore proposed, affecting teaching staff. An updated staffing structure had been circulated with the agenda.

On staffing, Alex raised a new proposal to take on a weekly volunteer from September 2019 as a full-time apprentice. If appointed, this person would work towards a Level 3 childcare and education qualification, working four days a week at Homerton and studying one day a week at Cambridge Regional College. Alex outlined for governors the possible costs of this appointment and noted that Homerton would also need to provide mentoring. **Governors supported the initiative to build staff capacity. They suggested that Alex discuss with the Head of the Fields Children's Centre her experience of employing apprentices.**

Alex

2018/19 end of year position – The Committee had noted a total end of year carry forward of £235,000, boosted by an unexpected surplus since governors' last budget figures in February. This position was due to a number of factors, including significantly higher income from payment of funding from the local authority to reflect the School's 100% occupancy for the last two years, and also from high numbers in the Nest and Holiday Club, and the lunch hour charges; balanced by reduced staff costs, with no Deputy Head since Alex's appointment as Head and some senior staff retiring or choosing to reduce hours. The new budgeting tool Orovia was much clearer and would enable more accurate forecasting.

Governors welcomed this unexpectedly strong end of year position. At the same time, governors also noted the ongoing uncertainty about national supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools; if this were to be discontinued, the carry forward would provide only a limited buffer. As the surplus had arisen in large part due to the very high levels of activity across the Centre in 2018/19, balanced by lower staff costs, governors asked Alex to consider how some of the carry forward might be used to improve the Centre for pupils and staff.

Alex

Budget for 2019/20 – Governors considered the proposed budget for 2019/20 and commented that this was well balanced, projecting a surplus of £3,000 on a turnover of £750,000. Governors noted that:

- The budget was based on hourly fee increases already agreed for September 2019, from £7.25 to £7.50 in the Nest and from £6.00 to £6.50 in the nursery. The increased charges would still be lower than those to be charged by some other local maintained nursery schools.
- The proposal did not include additional SEN funding. Almost £5,000 had already been received, following successful applications made by Bernie.

It was agreed unanimously:

To approve the budget proposals for 2019/20 as circulated with the agenda.

Governors thanked Sue for her continuing hard work to manage the finances.

Holiday club request from The Fields – Alex reported a recent request from The Fields Children's Centre, for Homerton to take some of its 2 year olds in the holiday club after The Fields moved to term-time only provision in September 2019. Alex reminded governors that the holiday club was already open to all children aged 3 to 5, even if they were not at Homerton. 2 year olds were currently taken only if they were already in the Nest.

Governors raised a number of issues:

- Whether there was space to accommodate additional children
- Whether priority should be given to children already at Homerton/in the Nest
- Whether any alternative provision was available closer to The Fields
- How well 2 year olds might settle in an unfamiliar setting

- Whether there might be scope for a familiar member of staff from The Fields to work alongside Fields children in Homerton's holiday club.

Governors agreed that it should be for staff to decide whether to take 2 year olds not from Homerton at the holiday club, taking into consideration the above issues. Alex agreed to discuss the request further with the Head at The Fields.

Alex

11. Policy Review

Governors reviewed the following policies:

Health and Safety Policy – agreed as circulated with the agenda.

Accessibility Plan and Equality & Diversity Plan – agreed as circulated with the agenda.

12. Any Other Urgent Business – none.

13. Date of Next Meeting – It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 9th July 2019 at 7.00pm at Homerton.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.