

**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at 7.00pm at Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Present**

Kay Blayney (from 7.55pm), Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke (from 7.20pm), Sam Garyali, Roger Lilley, Ken Ong (Chair), Mick Patel, Alex Pearson (Head), Mitali Peckham, Ross Sargent and Sue Smith

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

Governors' challenge highlighted in green

- |  | <b>Action</b>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Rinchen Ato and Tandy Harrison.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>2. Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>3. Minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019</b></p> <p>The open and confidential minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 were approved as correct records.</p>  |   |
| <p><b>4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019</b></p> <p>a) <b>Review of the website</b> – This action remained outstanding.</p> <p>b) <b>Head's interim performance review</b> – Roger reported that this had been carried out.</p> <p>c) <b>Holiday club request from The Fields</b> – A meeting had been arranged for September with staff from The Fields to explore this request further. Any arrangement would not start until the October half-term at the earliest.</p>   | <b>Rinchen/<br/>Alex</b>  |
| <p><b>5. Governing Body Membership</b></p> <p>Mick's current term of office as a co-opted governor would come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019. The Governing Body agreed unanimously to appoint Mick to a new four-year term beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.</p> <p>Alex had spoken to Marisol, who had recently had a second baby. Marisol had offered to stand down for the time being. Governors asked for their thanks and good wishes to be sent to Marisol and noted that she would be most welcome to return to the Governing Body in future if she wished.</p> <p>Ross and Sophie's terms of office as parent governors would be ending in November and both would be standing down. As Ross would not be able to attend in September, this was his last full Governing Body meeting. Governors thanked Ross for his contributions and agreed to arrange a farewell event for all outgoing governors in the autumn.</p> <p>Governors noted that overall, there would be one co-opted and two parent governor vacancies to fill in the autumn. A parent governor election would be run after the October half-term, once new families were settled in the Centre. Governors were asked to help identify a possible new co-opted governor. HR and financial expertise were always especially welcome. Alex also agreed to ask at the Faculty of Education whether they might suggest someone, to help maintain the link between the Faculty and Homerton.</p> | <b>Gwyneth</b><br><br><b>Gwyneth</b><br><br><b>All</b><br><br><b>Alex</b> |

## 6. Review of Governing Body Effectiveness

Ken reminded Governors that it was useful for the Governing Body to reflect annually on its practice. He invited Governors to record on Post It notes their thoughts on what the Governing Body did well and what might make it even better. These notes would be collated and reviewed to identify any particular issues or training needs.

A summary of Governors' contributions has been prepared as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

## 7. Head's Report

Alex briefed governors on the following issues:

- a) **Children** – The Centre was currently almost full.
- b) **Transitions** – Transition events were being held with a number of primary schools including Morley, Queen Edith's and the Spinney for children who would be moving up in September.
- c) **Data** – Data on the current cohort of children would be reviewed at the staff meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019. A report would be brought to the Governing Body meeting in September.

Governors asked whether there were fixed deadlines throughout the year for data returns. Mitali explained that there were, after baseline entries in October and in November/December for literacy and maths. The deadline for staff to enter end of year data had been 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019. These were internal deadlines as there was no requirement to submit data to the local authority. However, exit data was shared with individual schools to aid children's transitions. Alex also noted that a transition review meeting was planned in October with Morley, the primary school to which many children went after Homerton.

Governors asked whether in future it might be possible for data to come to the Curriculum Committee before the summer break, so that Governors could help with data interpretation. Alex noted that this would require a much later Curriculum Committee than was currently the practice, or could place additional pressure on staff if they had to submit data earlier, at a time when they were also busy writing reports.

- d) **Trips** – The recent trips to Wandlebury had gone well, with favourable weather and excellent support from parents.
- e) **Staff** – Governors noted that:
  - Harriet Riches, the Nest leader, had given in her notice the previous day. Alex was considering possible options for her replacement
  - Bernie Cafferkey would be starting her SENCo award in the autumn
  - Mitali is expecting to provide some additional support to Alex as Head from September
  - Alex is undertaking local authority leadership training
  - Louise Crook would be running Equalities training for staff on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 from 1.00pm to 3.30 pm. Governors were also invited to attend. **All**
  - A current volunteer would be interviewed on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019 for an apprenticeship. If successful, she would spend four days a week at Homerton and have one day a week for study. Support for the apprenticeship would be delivered by HIT Training.
- f) **Next year** – West Room, the 30 hour room, was full from September, as was East Red. There were currently some places left in East Blue, in South (the morning class) and in the Nest for the afternoon session.

- g) **Centre Development Plan for 2018/19** – This had been reviewed by both the Curriculum and Resources Committees and the updated version had been circulated with the agenda. Governors noted that:
- Sam’s induction was now complete, meaning that the point on governor induction could become green
  - Yellow points under Teaching and Learning would be rolled forward to 2019/20
  - There had been no visit to Rock Road library this year, as Felicity Higginson had been spending considerable amounts of time on Forest School training
  - Alex had attended training that day on the new Ofsted framework and would use this as the basis for the CDP for 2019/20, which would be brought to the Governing Body meeting in September.
- Alex**
- h) **Local authority Keeping In Touch (KIT) visit** – The report from the recent visit had just been received and would be brought to the Governing Body meeting in September. The main comments had been on data and on making this more ‘live’ for teaching staff. It had also been suggested that it would be useful to have 2-3 governors who were particularly conversant with the data. This would be especially important to address following recruitment of new governors with Ross, Sophie and Marisol standing down.
- Alex**
- i) **Morley tender** – The local authority tender for nursery provision from the former Morley Early Years base had closed on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. Interviews would be held in August with a view to the new service opening in January 2020. Governors had previously agreed that Homerton would not bid and Alex had written to offer support in establishing the new service. Governors noted that bidders had been asked for a 10-year business plan and back-up funding, which were not possible for the Centre to provide. A service covering children aged 0-4 was being sought, with long hours of opening including weekends if possible.
- j) **Meeting with Jon Lewis** – Jon Lewis, Service Director for Education, had cancelled the meeting he had previously arranged with the maintained nursery schools for 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The nursery school heads would be meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Alex was asked to share information with Governors about other nursery schools’ plans when appropriate.
- Alex**
- Governors noted that nationally, the trend was for nursery schools to federate, often in small clusters of two to three schools. Locally, much was likely to depend on whether the Government continued its funding for maintained nursery schools.
- k) **Visit by Heidi Allen MP** – Heidi Allen MP had visited Homerton on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019. She had been very supportive of the Centre and had agreed to help lobby the local authority, if necessary, not to make any decisions on the future of the maintained nursery schools in advance of the Government’s Spending Review.

## 8. Key Issues from Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee had met on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The minutes of the meeting would be brought to the Governing Body in September.

Arising from the meeting, Governors discussed the following points:

- **Governor visit on literacy and communication and language** – This had been carried out by Kay. She presented her report and commended the excellent practice she had observed throughout the Centre, including in the Nest. **The report had made a number of suggestions, including:**
  - Peer observation by teachers, to ensure best practice was shared between classrooms. Alex confirmed that this would be included in the new CDP
  - Ensuring clarity over the staff member responsible for the library

- Refreshing the outdoor space (this had been enthusiastically done by staff shortly after Kay’s visit)
  - Reviewing IT equipment and its use to ensure that no classroom had equipment that was obsolete.
- **Governor visits on physical development and understanding the world** – These had been carried out by Ross and his wife, Laura. Ross presented the reports and noted that they had also observed much excellent practice. **Suggestions made in their reports included:**
    - Greater use of age-appropriate scientific language and methodology as part of children’s play and learning
    - Greater clarity for staff on how to manage children’s rough and tumble play. Ross explained that there was research showing that young children needed to be given the opportunity to express themselves physically, without being told that all such behaviour was bad, to enable them over time to develop appropriate boundaries and more mature forms of expression. Governors commented that it could be difficult for staff to judge when physical expression was and was not appropriate. In general, children at Homerton were taught to have ‘kind hands’ and not to push each other. Alex agreed to discuss this issue further at a staff meeting and Ross agreed to provide relevant background reading.

**Alex  
Ross**

Responding to the reports, Governors:

- Thanked Kay, Ross and Laura for their work.
  - Asked Ross to add a section to the report on physical development on the weekly class he ran at Homerton and the holistic benefits this offered, fostering good self-control and positive behaviour as well as enhancing physical development. Alex commented that this text would also be useful as evidence of the Centre’s effective use of the Early Years Pupil Premium, which was used to fund this class.
  - Asked Alex to prepare action plans responding to the reports’ suggestions, setting out what actions would be taken and when.
  - Suggested that the reports provided good evidence for Ofsted of governors’ challenge. The reports were not published on the website but were collated centrally.
- **Policies** – The Understanding the World and the Physical Development Policies were agreed unanimously.

**Ross**

**Alex**

**All**

**Alex**

## 9. Key Issues from the Teaching School

Kay reported that:

- As a representative of the Cambridge Early Years Teaching School, she sat on a steering group of the Cambridge Teaching Schools Network. This was a collaborative network of four Teaching School Alliances, whose schools included Comberton Village College, Parkside and Saffron Waldon County High School. Kay explained that a recent meeting of the steering group had been advised that only one of the four Alliances, the Saffron Alliance based in Essex that included Saffron Waldon County High School, was eligible to apply for the Government’s new funding for ‘test and learn’ hubs. However, to apply for the funding, the Saffron Alliance needed an early years element and so CETYS had become involved with their application, thus helping to raise the profile of the maintained nursery schools.
- CETYS had also recently formed a partnership with the Essex Primary SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training), to deliver early years teacher training from September, if applications were received, or to provide external mentoring for their primary teacher training. Kay noted that there was significant interest in Early Years

Initial Teacher Training. Whilst this did not currently lead to Qualified Teacher status, it was nonetheless helping to improve the quality of the workforce.

## 10. Safeguarding

**Visit by Safeguarding Governor** – Ken reported that his annual monitoring visit as Safeguarding Governor had coincided with an audit visit from the local authority's Safeguarding Children Adviser, Jacqueline Cannell. *The meeting had been very useful and Jacqueline had commented that she had not previously been on an audit visit at which the Safeguarding Governor had been present, an indication of the importance placed by Homerton on effective safeguarding.* Ken's written report had been circulated with the agenda. Jacqueline's audit had identified some action points, including:

- Ensuring that designated safeguarding leads worked together so that all were familiar with all children in the Centre causing concern
- Increasing the level of detail noted in logs of concern to ensure an effective record of actions taken
- Having a low threshold to send on logs of concern to children's next schools.

Alex confirmed that she had followed up Jacqueline's recommendations.

**Keeping Children Safe in Education** – A new edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education was due to be published in September. Homerton's Safeguarding Policy would be updated in October to take into account the updated guidance.

**Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Monitoring Report** – Ken reported that Alex had submitted this online shortly before his visit. A copy had been circulated with the agenda.

## 11. Key Issues from Resources Committee

The minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were received. A number of the issues discussed had already been covered by the Governing Body. Governors additionally noted the following:

**Budget for flooring** – The Committee had agreed that £2,000 be spent on new flooring for the staff room and West Room.

**Nest budget** – It was possible that there would be a deficit on the Nest budget in September, due to the ages of current rising 3s. *This would be monitored and was not currently a major concern.*

**Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality Information** – The Committee had reviewed these documents and was recommending them for Governing Body approval. *Governors discussed the following points:*

- *In the Policy, the wording of Principle 5: 'We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist'. Governors questioned the difference between inequalities and barriers. It was suggested that inequalities could occur in the treatment of different groups, for example boys and girls; whereas barriers to learning could be found within a single group, for example boys, whose fine motor control tended to develop later than girls'.*
- *Throughout the Policy, whether a wider definition of gender identity might be more appropriate than the current wording, 'both women and men, girls and boys' and 'people of all sexual identities'. Following discussion, Governors agreed to make no change to the wording but agreed that the key issue was ensuring appropriate interactions with and between all of the Centre's children and families.*

Both documents were approved as circulated with the agenda.

**Budget monitoring reports** – The budget monitoring reports for May 2019 had been circulated with the agenda. **Governors noted that there had been little variance from planned budgets in the first two months of the year.** Ray Byford of the local authority's Education Finance team would be making his termly visit to Homerton the following week.

**Objectives for 2019/20** – **The Committee had discussed these and in particular had highlighted:**

- Responding appropriately to any change in the financing of maintained nursery schools
- The need for Governors to be familiar with the new Ofsted framework. Alex advised that Jennifer Barker, Early Years Improvement Adviser at the local authority, had offered to lead a session on this at the September meeting of the Governing Body. Governors welcomed this offer.

**12. Any Other Urgent Business** – none.

**13. Dates of Future Meetings**

It was agreed that Governing Body meetings for 2019/20 would be held on the following dates, all at 7.00pm at Homerton:

- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019
- Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019
- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 202
- Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020
- Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

The first Committee dates of the new school year were also confirmed as follow:

- Resources Committee – Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 at 1.30pm
- Curriculum Committee – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at 9.30am.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.