

Homerton Early Years Centre

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Monday 23rd September 2019 at 7.00pm at Homerton Early Years Centre

Present

Kay Blayney, Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke, Sam Garyali, Tandy Harrison (from 7.30pm), Roger Lilley, Ken Ong, Mick Patel, Alex Pearson (Head), Mitali Peckham (from 7.40pm) and Sue Smith

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

Also present: Jenn Barker, Early Years Improvement Adviser, Cambridgeshire County Council (until 7.50pm)

Governors' challenge highlighted in green

Action

1. Election of the Chair of the Governing Body for the Academic Year 2019-2020

It was agreed unanimously to elect Ken Ong as the Chair of the Governing Body for the academic year 2019-2020.

2. Election of Vice-Chairs of the Governing Body for the Academic Year 2019-2020

It was agreed unanimously to elect Kay Blayney and Roger Lilley as joint Vice-Chairs of the Governing Body for the academic year 2019-2020.

3. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Rinchen Ato and Ross Sargent.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Briefing on the New Ofsted Framework

Jenn Barker, Early Year Improvement Adviser at the local authority, attended the meeting to brief Governors on the new Ofsted inspection framework, as set out in the School Inspection Handbook. The new framework had come into effect on 1st September 2019. To date, no maintained nursery schools had been inspected under the new framework. Two Cambridgeshire primary schools had been inspected and their reports were awaited. Jenn would share information on inspections with Alex as this became available.

Two handouts were circulated to Governors. The first was a summary of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Governors noted that:

- As an 'outstanding' school, Homerton was due to receive a short Section 8 inspection to assess whether the 'outstanding' should be retained. With fewer than 150 pupils on the school roll, the inspection would last one day.
- The new approach included a 90-minute phone call between the lead inspector and the head teacher the day before the inspection. The day of the inspection would then be used to seek evidence to confirm the accuracy of the information provided by the head teacher. On the day, the inspector would be visiting rooms quite quickly, with fewer formal meetings and less document review.
- The primary focus of the inspection would be on the 'quality of education' within the school, covering all aspects of the curriculum. This would be evaluated in three strands: intent, implementation and impact. Ofsted did not prescribe a particular

teaching method but would be looking for a shared understanding of the school's chosen approach.

- The inspector would not look at internal data but would expect to hear how data was being used to monitor children's progress and inform teaching.
- The inspection would consider staff wellbeing and support.
- The inspection would consider how the school provided children with the 'cultural capital' to succeed in life. Jenn drew attention to a useful article in Nursery World on this, which she would share with Alex.

The second handout, on applying the EIF in maintained nursery schools, covered the specific factors to be addressed during inspection of maintained nursery schools. These included:

- Identification of and support for children with SEND
- Identification of and support for disadvantaged children, especially those eligible for EYPP
- Involvement of parents
- An emphasis on communication, language and literacy.

Jenn noted that:

- The local authority's checklist on preparing for an Ofsted inspection had been updated to reflect the new framework. Jenn would leave the updated version with Alex.
- One Cambridgeshire primary school, Cottenham, had taken part in the pilot of the new framework. Jenn had spoken to the Early Years lead at the school who had confirmed that their experience had matched the points outlined above.
- Following a Section 8 inspection, the inspector would give an overall judgement as to whether the school had retained its 'outstanding' assessment. If the 'outstanding' assessment was not secure, it was possible that Ofsted would return to carry out a two-day inspection. This would result in judgements in four separate areas: the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management. The grade descriptors under each of these headings had been changed and overall the requirements to achieve 'outstanding' were more rigorous.

Governors discussed the following queries with Jenn:

- Noted that under the previous framework, Homerton had been due for inspection in the summer term of 2019, three years from its last inspection. However, under the new framework, 'outstanding' schools were re-inspected after four years, suggesting that Homerton's next inspection could be in the summer term of 2020.
- Asked whether the inspector would still review the school's website. Jenn confirmed that this would still be done, making it essential to ensure that the website was compliant and up to date. It would also be important to ensure that the school's statement of ethos as published on the website was known and shared by all staff and Governors.
- Asked what the role of Governors would be during an inspection. Jenn suggested that during a short inspection, the inspector would be checking that there was a shared vision for the school, with Governors clear on what the key priorities were and how they would be delivered. Governors were also likely to be asked how they

were supporting the development and implementation of the curriculum, for example through Governor visits.

- Asked how support for children with SEND would be assessed during an inspection. Jenn explained that the inspector would be looking for early identification of children with SEND, appropriate support to help them to progress and careful tracking of this progress. This should include effective working with the child's family and with external agencies.

In conclusion, it was agreed that Governors and staff should ensure that evidence of relevant plans and actions was set out in the Centre Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Framework. Other supporting documents such as records of Governor visits should also be identified. Governors agreed that this should be addressed at the October meeting of the Curriculum Committee.

Alex/Kay

Governors thanked Jenn for her useful briefing and she left the meeting.

6. Minutes of 9th July 2019

The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 9th July 2019 were approved as a correct record. The notes of the Governing Body self-evaluation attached as an appendix to the minutes were considered under item 16 below.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 9th July 2019

- a) **Review of the website** – Governors noted that this action had been carried forward a number of times. It was agreed to add it to the agenda for the next Curriculum Committee meeting.
- b) **Holiday club request from The Fields** – Alex reported that a meeting to discuss this request had not yet taken place, although dialogue with The Fields was continuing. The Fields had confirmed that none of their families would be requesting a holiday club place at Homerton for the October half-term.
- c) **Follow-up to Governor visits** – Kay agreed to cover this at the Curriculum Committee meeting on 9th October 2019.

Alex/Kay

Kay

8. Governing Body Membership

Governors noted that Ken's term of office as a co-opted governor was due to end on 22nd November 2019. It was agreed unanimously to appoint Ken to a new four-year term when his current one ended.

Gwyneth

Ross and Sophie's terms of office as parent governors would be ending on 22nd November 2019 and both were standing down. Governors thanked them for their valuable contributions and agreed to arrange a farewell event, possibly in Thriplow.

Alex/Ken/
Ross/Sophie

Following Ross and Sophie's departure there would be two parent governor vacancies on the Governing Body. In addition, there was currently a vacancy for a co-opted governor. It was proposed by Ken and agreed to carry out a governor skills audit, to help inform recruitment to the vacant posts. Gwyneth asked all governors to complete their returns before half-term, to enable the results to be compiled before the parent governor elections were run in the second autumn half-term.

Gwyneth/
All
Governors

9. Standing Orders

Governors received the Governing Body's Standing Orders. No amendments were proposed. It was agreed unanimously to adopt the Standing Orders.

10. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

Gwyneth reminded all Governors of the need to complete a fresh declaration of pecuniary interests form for the start of the new school year. She circulated paper copies of the form at the meeting and all Governors present completed them. Gwyneth would chase up forms from those Governors not present.

Gwyneth

11. Committee Memberships

Committee memberships for 2019/20 were confirmed as unchanged from 2018/19. Ross and Sophie would be removed from the lists when their terms of office ended and successors sought from amongst the new Governors to be recruited.

Gwyneth

12. Appointment of Lead Governors

Lead governor appointments for 2019/20 were confirmed as unchanged from 2018/19, subject to the following:

- a) **Equal Opportunities/Monitoring Racial Incidents** – Kate to replace Sophie when Sophie’s term of office ends. Sophie noted that she had a final meeting planned with Mitali and Liz Greenhalgh; it was agreed that Kate would also attend this.
- b) **The Nest and Owlets** – Rinchen to replace Kate as a parent with more recent experience of having children in The Nest, subject to Rinchen confirming her willingness.

**Mitali/
Sophie/
Kate**

**Kate/
Rinchen**

13. Governor Code of Practice

The Governor Code of Practice was received. Governors were reminded that an amendment had been agreed in February 2019, emphasising the importance of best practice in handling e-mails and observing confidentiality, particularly as the Governing Body had agreed not to require Governors or the Clerk to use school e-mail addresses. No new amendments were proposed. It was agreed unanimously to adopt the Governor Code of Practice for 2019-2020.

14. Terms of Reference for Curriculum and Resources Committees

It was agreed unanimously to adopt the terms of reference for the Curriculum and Resources Committees. The following dates had been set for the Committees’ first meetings:

- Resources – Thursday 3rd October 2019 at 1.30pm
- Curriculum – Wednesday 9th October 2019 at 9.30am.

Committee members agreed to set dates for the rest of the year at their first meetings.

Roger/Kay

15. Proposed Dates for Meetings of the Governing Body for 2019/20

Governing Body meeting dates for 2019/20 were agreed as set out below:

- Thursday 5th December 2019
- Wednesday 12th February 2020
- Thursday 19th March 2020
- Wednesday 29th April 2020
- Thursday 9th July 2020.

16. Governor Development and Training

At the last Governing Body meeting, Governors had recorded on Post It notes their ideas of what the Governing Body did well and what might make it even better. A summary of these ideas had been circulated as an appendix to the minutes.

Governors discussed the following points relating to the self-evaluation:

- **Management support and continuity** – Governors felt that the Governing Body was in a relatively strong position, with a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, plus another Governor who had previous experience of chairing a Governing Body. It was suggested that Resources Committee consider further the support available to Alex, given that Homerton did not have a Deputy Head and that there were increasing demands for Alex to attend meetings away from the Centre. Alex noted that some additional time had already been set aside for leadership activities; she also recorded her appreciation of the support she was receiving from Mitali.
- **Managing uncertainty** – Governors agreed that it would be important to maintain open dialogue with the other nursery schools. It would also be important to communicate effectively with staff and parents to ensure that they had accurate information.
- **Governor training** – All Governors were encouraged to attend relevant training, possibly in pairs. Governors' Termly Briefings could be useful. Governors commented that inviting people to give briefings at the start of Governing Body meetings was also efficient and effective.
- **Data reporting** – It was agreed to discuss this point later in the meeting (Minute 17 f) below).

Roger

17. Headteacher's Report

Alex briefed Governors on a number of issues:

- a) **Staffing and nursery cohort** – An updated paper had been e-mailed to Governors shortly before the meeting. Governors noted that:
- The nursery school was mainly full, with a few spaces remaining in the morning class.
 - The Nest was full. Following the departure of the Nest Leader in July, other Nest staff were stepping up to lead these rooms. A new Leader would need to be recruited in due course. An apprentice had been appointed in The Nest, as discussed with Governors at their last meeting.
 - There were three more children with SEND in the Centre than had been anticipated in July, bringing the total number to 11. Some of these children had very high levels of need and already had or were obtaining Education, Care and Health Plans. In addition to these children, there were a number of others with speech and language issues.
- b) **Meeting with local authority** – Alex and Roger reported on a meeting they had recently attended between the nursery schools and Jon Lewis, Service Director for Education at the local authority.
- [This item is covered in more detail in the confidential minutes.]*
- c) **Centre Development Plan (CDP)** – This had been circulated with the agenda, setting out aims for the coming year. The CDP had been restructured to reflect the new Ofsted framework. Governors particularly noted the focus on:

- Planning in the Moment, an approach that looked at individual children and also involved parents
- Staff wellbeing and continuing professional development, which would include visits to each other's classes and to other schools and centres
- Increasing staff use of data on the computer, especially in relation to vulnerable groups such as children with SEND and those eligible for EYPP
- Literacy and expansion of the core book range.

- d) **Morley tender** – It had been announced that day that YMCA Trinity had won the tender for nursery provision at the former Morley early years base. YMCA Trinity was a group formed from the merging of the YMCAs in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk. Governors noted that the YMCA was best known for its charitable work with young and disadvantaged adults but that YMCA Trinity also ran three childcare centres and was keen to expand this provision. Governors were reminded that the tender had particularly required full day care and baby places.

The local authority had offered to arrange a meeting between YMCA Trinity and Homerton to foster good partnership working and Alex had agreed to attend.

- e) **St John the Evangelist Centre opening** – Kay reminded Governors that the new Centre's official opening was on 28th September 2019. There would be an Education stand. Alex and Sue agreed to provide posters and leaflets promoting Homerton.

Alex/Sue

- f) **End of year data for the nursery and The Nest** – End of year data for the nursery and the Nest had been circulated with the agenda, together with some commentary. Governors reviewed the data with Mitali and particularly noted the following points:

- For both the nursery and the Nest, there were bar graphs for autumn-, spring- and summer-born children, showing their progress during the year in the areas of community and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; and reading and writing and maths (the last two for the nursery only). All groups of children were showing good progress, including summer-born children, even though some of the children in this group had had low scores on entering the Centre. Some spring- and summer-born children in the Nest had made particularly good progress, which continued to be in evidence as these children moved into the nursery.
- The end of year data for the nursery had highlighted concerns relating to self-confidence, maths and reading: after a year at nursery, it had appeared that more children were leaving below age-related expectations than had come in at this level. However, the data system had made it possible for staff to study the individual children involved and in each case, staff were satisfied that those children who were below age related expectations at both the beginning and the end of the year had made sufficient progress from their individual starting points.
- Two new actions were planned this year: for the first time, maths data for this year would be compared with the previous year's; and the progress in nursery of children who had previously been in the Nest would be compared with the progress of those children who had not.

Governors asked the following questions:

- **How the data was gathered** – Mitali explained that staff used a sheet of statements of what children could do in each of the subject areas; for example, a child might be able to do three of the six things listed. Data was then entered numerically. Staff took time before making their assessments; for example, doing the baseline assessment at the beginning of the year took a month. Both teachers and teaching assistants contributed to the assessments.

- Which data package was used – Mitali explained that the statements came from the Development Matters curriculum and attainment records were then entered into Target Tracker, Homerton’s data package. Development Matters is not a statutory document but it is used by most nursery schools and Early Years settings.
- Whether all staff could use Target Tracker – Mitali explained that she was working with staff and that they were becoming more conversant with the system, both in entering and using data. Ultimately the aim should be to use the data to highlight groups and individuals of possible concern and to guide interventions.
- Frequency of data reporting to Governors – It was suggested that Curriculum Committee maintain the oversight of how staff were collating and using data. Progress data and how it was being used should be reported to the Governing Body after the spring and summer terms, when comparisons could be made against the baseline.

Mitali

Mitali

18. Curriculum Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Curriculum Committee meeting held on 24th June 2019 were received. The issues covered at the meeting had been discussed at the last Governing Body meeting.

19. Key Issues from the Teaching School

Kay updated Governors on Teaching School developments:

- The Teaching School had recently formed a partnership with the Essex Primary SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training) and she and Kay Dimelow were working as external mentors with two trainees each. It was intended to establish a Cambridge hub under the Essex umbrella, with funding likely to be available next year for further mentors from the nursery schools.
- The Teaching School had won funding to deliver STEP behaviour management training in St Neots. The SEND support to Fenland schools was continuing.

20. Safeguarding

Governors were advised that a new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education had been published for September 2019. Changes from the previous version were listed in Annex H. Parts 1 and 2 were of greatest relevance to Governors.

Ken agreed to review Homerton’s Safeguarding Policy in light of the updated version.

Ken

21. Any Other Urgent Matters

- a) **Exit interviews** – Kay noted that she had recently supported Alex in conducting an exit interview, which had been requested by a member of staff leaving Homerton. She suggested that Resources Committee should consider whether the Centre should have a written policy on the conduct of exit interviews.

Roger/
Alex

22. Date of Next Meeting

The next Governing Body meeting would be held on Thursday 5th December 2019 at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.