

Homerton Early Years Centre

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Zoom on Monday 20th September 2021 at 7.30pm

Present

Sam Garyali, Roger Lilley, Ken Ong, Mick Patel, Alex Pearson (Head), Mitali Peckham and Surabhi Singh
Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

Governors' challenge highlighted in green

- | | Action |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Election of the Chair of the Governing Body for the Academic Year 2021-2022 | |
| It was agreed unanimously to elect Ken Ong as the Chair of the Governing Body for the academic year 2021-2022. | |
| 2. Welcome and Apologies for Absence | |
| Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Eirini Gkouskou, Tandy Harrison and Sue Smith. | |
| 3. Declarations of Interest | |
| There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 4. Minutes of 12th July 2021 | |
| The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 12 th July 2021 were approved as a correct record. | |
| 5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 12th July 2021 | |
| a) Equalities Objectives – Governors had noted at the previous meeting that Homerton's current Equalities Objectives covered 2019-21. Alex had proposed that review of the Objectives be aligned with staff training on equalities, which took place every three years and was next due in September 2022. Ken reminded Governors that they had agreed that this was sensible but had asked for the Objectives to be brought for brief review in the autumn of 2021 to ensure that they remained fit for purpose. Alex confirmed that she would bring them to the next Governing Body meeting on 8th December 2021. | Alex |
| b) Equality and Diversity Policy – Alex confirmed that she had added an appendix to the Policy setting out the procedure to be followed by staff when encountering prejudice expressed by children. | |
| c) Governor visit template – Alex confirmed that she had amended the template to note that Governor visits could be an opportunity for staff to practise telling individual children's stories, as required by the new EYFS framework. | |
| d) Makaton and English as an additional language (EAL) – Kay Blayney had agreed at the previous meeting to ask an EYITT student who had written a paper on the links between Makaton and EAL if this could be shared with Governors. Kay had also agreed to invite the student to give a presentation at the Homerton staff training day on 4 th January 2022. Alex agreed to follow this up with Kay. | Alex |
| e) Biting Policy – Ken confirmed that he would send Alex some proposed wording to add to this policy, clarifying how the first aid response would differ depending on the severity of a bite, specifically whether the skin had been broken. | Ken/
Alex |

6. Governing Body Membership

Governors noted that there were currently two vacancies on the Governing Body, one for a co-opted governor and one for a parent governor. In addition, Rinchen's term of office as a parent governor would end on 4th December 2021.

It was agreed to run parent governor elections after half-term, once new children and families had settled at Homerton. The co-opted governor vacancy would be reviewed once the outcome of the parent governor recruitment process was known.

**Gwyneth/
Alex**

7. Standing Orders

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

8. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

The 2020-21 register of pecuniary interests had been circulated with the agenda. All Governors present confirmed that there were no changes to their previous declarations. Gwyneth would chase up responses from those Governors not present and would update the website.

Gwyneth

9. Committee Chairs, Governing Body Vice-Chairs and Committee Memberships

Ken noted that Tandy had confirmed to him before the meeting her willingness to continue as Chair of the Curriculum Committee and a Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.

It was agreed unanimously:

- To reappoint Tandy as Chair of Curriculum Committee
- To reappoint Roger as Chair of Resources Committee
- To reappoint Tandy and Roger as Vice-Chairs of the Governing Body.

Committee memberships were confirmed as for 2020-21, subject to the following points:

- Former Governors Kay Blayney and Kate Daenke to be removed from the list
- Resources Committee meetings to be arranged if possible to accommodate Surabhi's work commitments
- Memberships to be reviewed again following the parent governor elections.

Gwyneth

Roger

Gwyneth

10. Appointment of Lead Governors

Lead governor appointments for 2021-22 were confirmed as unchanged from 2020-21, subject to the following:

Gwyneth

- As an interim arrangement, Ken would take on the role of Lead Governor for Equal Opportunities/Monitoring Racial Incidents, replacing Kate Daenke; this would be reviewed following the parent governor elections
- Mick would replace Kay Blayney on Head Teacher's Performance Management, working alongside Tandy and Roger
- Sam would support Mick in his role as Lead Governor for Health and Safety
- The post of Teaching School Link Governor was no longer required

- The post of Lead Governor for the Nest and Owlets would be reviewed following the parent governor elections.

11. Governor Code of Practice

The Governor Code of Practice was received. No changes were proposed and it was agreed unanimously to adopt the Governor Code of Practice for 2021-22.

Ken reminded Governors of the requirement to keep emails and documents physically and digitally secure as confidential items may be included. Also, when attending meetings remotely, Governors should ensure that discussions are not overheard by other household members.

It was noted that an induction process was in place for new Governors, which included meetings with Ken and Alex and documentation provided by Gwyneth. New Governors were also encouraged to attend the local authority's induction training.

12. Terms of Reference for Curriculum and Resources Committees

It was agreed unanimously to adopt the terms of reference for the Curriculum and Resources Committees.

13. Meeting Formats for 2021-22

A local authority Governance update for September 2021 had been circulated with the agenda. Ken noted that in this update, the local authority recommended that Governor meetings take place remotely for the first autumn half-term and that Governor monitoring also be carried out remotely. Governors made the following comments:

- Recognised that meeting remotely, or outdoors, was good practice, given the continuing prevalence of Covid in Cambridge and, besides any health risks, the disruption to Homerton and Governors' work and activities that would result from Covid cases.
- Noted that Governor visits were not usually planned for the first autumn half-term, since the focus during these weeks was on settling children in the Centre.
- Noted that the review of the year carried out by Governors at the last meeting, as recorded in the appendix to the minutes, had included a number of positive comments on the value of Zoom meetings, which could be more practical for some Governors to attend than meetings held in person.
- Agreed to revisit the format of Governor meetings after half-term, with the aim of holding Full Governing Body meetings in person at least once per term if circumstances permitted.
- Noted that a parents' evening was planned for the beginning of November. It was not yet known if this would be held in person or on Zoom. It was suggested that it would be useful for some Governors to be involved in the evening, especially as parent governor recruitment would then be underway. Alex agreed to arrange this. She noted that the weekly bulletin would also be used to advertise the parent governor vacancies, together with informal networking by staff and existing parent governors.

Ken/
Alex

Alex

14. Committee Meeting Dates

It was agreed that the next meeting of Resources Committee would take place on Friday 15th October 2021 at 2.00pm. Governors would agree nearer the time whether the meeting would take place in person or on Zoom

Roger

Tandy would contact Curriculum Committee members to arrange a meeting before the October half-term.

Tandy

15. Headteacher's Report

Alex briefed Governors on a number of issues:

- a) **Staffing** – The Centre was fully staffed, with appointments made to replace two members of staff who had retired and a third, a teaching assistant in the Nest, who had given in her notice just before the end of the summer term.
- b) **Children** – Governors noted that:
- Holiday club had been well attended and take-up of breakfast club and Owlets was good, helping the Centre's financial position.
 - The nursery was almost full with 92 places taken. Four places remained in South and possibly one in East Blue. The Nest was also almost full with 33 places taken, including 10 funded children.
 - There were currently six children with identified special educational needs, one of whom already had an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Four of the six were expected to receive an EHCP shortly. It was likely that more children with additional needs would be identified, particularly speech and language needs, as staff got to know the new intake.
- Governors were advised that specialists were now able to visit Homerton, assisting with the assessment and support of children with SEN. A link planning teacher had recently visited, whom Bernie Cafferkey (Homerton's SENCo) had found very supportive.
- Six children were currently eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium. This number was also expected to increase.
 - Governors asked whether Covid was currently causing disruption to life at Homerton. Alex noted that staff were now double-vaccinated and there had been no cases since the start of term, although one child had tested positive in August. The situation felt very different from the previous year, since the Centre would continue as normal even if children tested positive, unless a threshold was reached in which case the local authority would become involved.
- c) **OFSTED** – OFSTED had inspected Homerton on 15th July 2021, just after the last Governing Body meeting. Ken led Governors in congratulating Alex, Mitali and all staff on Homerton's assessment as 'outstanding', noting that Homerton had now been 'outstanding' for 23 consecutive years. Ken also noted that although the inspectors' report was brief, the inspectors had been highly complimentary during their visit.

The inspectors' report had identified only one action to prepare for the next inspection, to ensure that curriculum plans align more closely with teachers' weekly plans. This was already in hand. A point relating to Section 128 checks for Governors had been identified and addressed on the day of the inspectors' visit, with the help of Sue Smith and EPM.

Governors commented that the timing of the OFSTED visit at the end of the previous term meant that the staff at Homerton were now well placed to focus on operational issues such as embedding the new EYFS framework and consolidating the Centre's digital offering. Governors also thanked those who had helped to work on the Governors' reference document for OFSTED, especially Kate Daenke. Governors asked that this be kept up to date so that it could be used again in future.

Alex

- d) **Publicity following OFSTED inspection** – Governors noted that the OFSTED report was now public and agreed that it should be used to help promote Homerton. A link had been added to the website and the report would be e-mailed to both current parents and the previous year's parents, who had been very supportive on the day of the inspection and in completing OFSTED's online survey.

Governors agreed that coverage should also be sought from local publications, for example Cambridge News and the Queen Edith's magazine. It was suggested that the aim should be in-depth coverage of life at Homerton, including the OFSTED rating. The timing was not urgent, given that the new school year had only just begun and that Homerton was not currently actively seeking new families.

Alex

Governors also asked Alex to write to inform Anthony Browne, the local MP, of the 'outstanding' outcome, especially since Homerton could be again seeking his help to lobby for funding for maintained nursery schools. Ken noted that a comprehensive spending review was due in October.

Alex noted that she had been contacted by the local authority, who were interested in the inspection's 'deep dive' into personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and in Homerton's 'outstanding' outcome; a colleague would be visiting to meet with Alex and Mitali in October.

- e) **Centre Development Plan (CDP) and Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)** – Governors had reviewed the CDP for 2021-22 at the previous meeting. **Under 'Quality of education', Governors asked about the aim to put an interactive core book on the website termly. Alex explained that during lockdown, staff had recorded videos for the children of themselves reading core books. These had been welcomed by families and staff were keen to continue the practice throughout the coming year.**

In relation to the SEF, Alex explained that key aims were set out under four headings: quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management. Alex also noted that in the context of the new EYFS framework, she and Mitali would be considering how to monitor children's progress over the coming year and how to report this to Governors. It was felt that some data monitoring would still be useful for ongoing assessment.

16. Safeguarding

Ken reported that there were no issues to raise.

17. Any Other Urgent Matters

- a) **The School Bus** – Alex reported that she had been contacted by the local authority about The School Bus, a website that provided guidance and advice alongside statutory and good practice resources for school leadership teams, including Governors. The local authority had asked Alex to provide staff and Governor e-mail addresses, to enable them to access the website. Governors agreed that she could do this. Surabhi noted that she would like her work e-mail address to be used, not her personal e-mail address, and agreed to send this to Alex.

Alex
Surabhi

18. Dates of Future Meetings

Dates of Governing Body meetings were confirmed for the following dates, all at 7.30pm:

- Wednesday 8th December 2021
- Monday 7th February 2022
- Wednesday 16th March 2022
- Wednesday 27th April 2022
- Tuesday 12th July 2022.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.