

## Homerton Early Years Centre

### Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Zoom on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 7.30pm

#### **Present**

Isa Garcia Crestani, Stefania Deidda, Sam Garyali, Elizabeth Head (from 7.55pm), Ken Ong (Chair), Mick Patel, Rob Payne, Alex Pearson (Head) and Mitali Peckham

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

#### Governors' challenge highlighted in green

	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b>	
Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting was being held on Zoom due to high numbers of Covid cases in Cambridge, including some at Homerton. Apologies for absence were received from Eirini Gkouskou, Tandy Harrison, Suzy Hughes, Roger Lilley and Surabhi Singh.	
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	
There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3. Minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022</b>	
The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 were approved as a correct record.	
<b>4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022</b>	
<b>a) Health and Safety visit</b> – Mick and Sam had conducted the annual Health and Safety visit, together with Roy Stamp, Homerton's caretaker. The safety aspect of the planned roofing work had been reviewed. No specific concerns had been identified for this or in other areas.	
<b>b) September admissions</b> – Alex and Mitali thanked Governors and staff for all their help in advertising and filling places from September. The open day on Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> May had been well attended and particularly successful.	
<b>c) Fee increases</b> – Parents had been advised of forthcoming fee increases.	
<b>5. Governor Appointments</b>	
The Governing Body welcomed Rob Payne, who had been elected unopposed as a result of the recent parent governor recruitment process.	
It was agreed that Rob would join the Curriculum Committee.	<b>Rob/ Gwyneth/ Tandy</b>
Governors noted that Tandy Harrison's term of office as the local authority governor was due to end on 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2022. Tandy had confirmed that she was willing to serve another term. Governors agreed unanimously to renominate Tandy. Gwyneth would advise the local authority.	<b>Gwyneth</b>
<b>6. Head's Report</b>	
Alex briefed Governors on a number of issues.	

a) **Children** – Governors noted that:

- Transition visits were now complete, with teachers from nearly all schools receiving children from Homerton coming to visit the children at the Centre.
- Recent successful events had included the Really Wheelie event; Claytime; butterfly hatching; and local visits, for nursery children to the Nightingale Avenue park and for Nest children to the allotment. Alex noted that these visits replaced the coach trips to Wandlebury of previous years. The visits within walking distance had proved simpler, more affordable and highly enjoyable for all involved.
- The goodbye singing event scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 had just been postponed to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022, as five members of staff were currently absent with Covid.
- Take-up of the summer holiday club was good with 15-20 children for most sessions.
- For September 2022. 23 of 24 available places were filled in both West and East Red/Purple. 18 places were filled in East Blue/Purple, with 6 places left in the 2.5 day class running during the second half of the week. In South, 11 places were filled in the morning class and 7 in the 2.5 day class. In the Nest, places had recently been filled, meaning that there were 3 now remaining, with more families due to be shown around.

b) **Staffing** – Governors noted that:

- Staffing arrangements from September had been confirmed. Homerton was still looking for lunchtime supervisors for Thursdays and Fridays. In addition, cover was needed for tea on Wednesdays, from 3.30pm to 6.00pm, although staff could manage this if necessary.
- Cambridgeshire Music had just confirmed that they could provide Homerton with a music teacher who could come for 2.5 hours on Tuesday mornings, a total of 31 weeks per year, at a cost of approximately £3,000. **Governors discussed the following:**

- **Commented that the success of the sessions would depend greatly on the individual. Alex noted that the person proposed was an Early Years music teacher, who would also be working at Histon Early Years Centre. Alex agreed to speak to her if possible before confirming the arrangement.**
- **Noted that the cost was similar to the budget previously allocated for Rachel Rigby.**
- **Noted that the timing of sessions on a Tuesday morning meant that a small number of children who attended only for the second half of the week would miss them. It had been suggested that Homerton could ask the teacher if she would be willing for the sessions to be recorded for use with these children. Recordings might also benefit children with additional needs who might find it harder to take part in large groups sessions. Governors noted that any use of recordings would need to be clearly defined and agreed with the teacher.**

**Alex**

**Governors agreed that music was a key element of Homerton's offering and that Alex should confirm the arrangements for September, subject to the points above.**

**Alex**

- A new caretaker had been appointed to take over from Roy Stamp, who would be retiring. Bob Negus would start on 1st September 2022 and work alongside Roy until Roy's last day, 16th September 2022.

- Suzy Hughes had undertaken a number of training courses in her new role as Office Manager, with budget training still to be completed. Alex thanked Sue Smith, the previous Office Manager, who had been helping with handover and cover during the summer term.
- Alex thanked Mitali and Bernie Cafferkey for mentoring Homerton's recent PCGE student, who had been excellent.

c) **Centre Development Plan (CDP) and Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)** – The CDP and SEF for 2021-22 and the draft CDP and SEF for 2022-23 had been circulated with the agenda. Governors noted that most actions on the 2021-22 CDP had been completed, with a small number carried forward to 2022-23. Governors discussed the following:

- Staff would be taking part in an Equalities training session from 9.00am to 12.00pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022. **As the Lead Governor for Equal Opportunities, Isa confirmed that she would attend if possible.** Isa
- Covid had made it difficult for Governor visits to take place. One on helicopter stories had been completed, with visits on Planning in the Moment and SEND carried over. **All Governors were encouraged to make both formal and informal visits during Centre hours when possible.**

Governors received the 2021-22 and draft 2022-23 SEFs, noting that the SEF was a useful tool to help in preparing for an Ofsted inspection. Homerton had last been inspected in July 2021, meaning that another visit was not imminent.

d) **Building works** – A meeting had taken place the previous week with the roofing contractors, **which Sam had attended together with staff.** A 7-week project would start on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to reroof the whole building and to replace fascia boards and some windows. Once this was complete, solar panels would be installed and then the air source heat pump. The contractors had not been able to give a timescale for the later works, as the delivery date for the solar panels was not yet known and the heat pump, which had not yet been ordered, had at least a 3-month lead time. All work would need to be completed by March 2023, when the funding ended.

**Governors expressed some surprise at this timetable, as it had initially been expected that all work would be completed over the summer. Alex and Sam explained that more work to the roof was needed than had been anticipated. Overall, it was the local authority's responsibility to co-ordinate and deliver the works. Homerton was emphasising the need for work to be carried out during the holidays, when children were not in the Centre, if at all possible. If unavoidable, Nest children could temporarily use the nursery garden whilst the air source heat pump was installed in the Nest garden, but the overall disruption would still be considerable. Governors also noted that the Centre's existing boilers would now need to be serviced and relied upon for the coming winter.**

Alex reported that Bouygues, the main contractor, had been in contact that day to request a further meeting. The local authority property management adviser was already due to visit on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 9.00am. It was agreed to propose an 8.00am meeting that day with Bouygues, **with Sam and Mick to attend,** together with Roy Stamp and Bob Negus.

**Sam/Mick**

## 7. Update from Curriculum Committee

The minutes of the Curriculum Committee meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 were received. Governors noted that these meetings had considered a number of issues, including:

- The implications of some children spending six terms in the nursery.

- Homerton’s method of teaching phonics, with the decision taken to continue with the current programme. Alex noted that Eirini’s input to this discussion had been especially helpful, given her early years expertise.
- Recording of Planning in the Moment notes. Mitali explained that staff in the different classrooms had compared how they used this approach to make detailed observations, helping to refine Homerton’s approach.

## 8. Safeguarding

The Annual Safeguarding Monitoring Report had been circulated to Governors

As the Lead Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding, Ken noted that there were no issues to report. He would be making his annual visit on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Ken/Alex

## 9. Update from Resources Committee

The minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were received. Governors noted:

- Costs of maintenance projects, including sewer pumps and cleaning and a new internet system.
- That the 2022-23 budget had been submitted to the local authority, with Ray Byford, the local authority financial advisor, due to visit Homerton the following day.
- Agreement to stop accepting cash payments from families, in line with local authority advice.
- That the Committee would consider in February 2023 whether to require a deposit of £100 to secure a fee-paying place from September 2023, refundable only once the child starts.
- That the Government had recently published a consultation on Early Years funding formulae, accessible here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/early-years-funding-formulae-2022/>

Governors welcomed the recognition of the value of maintained nursery schools’ contribution and the aim of ensuring more equal distribution of supplementary funding between them. Concern was expressed at any proposal to alter staffing ratios to increase the number of young children one member of staff could look after: this could compromise children’s safety and wellbeing and could also have a negative impact on staff. If ratios were increased, this would enable settings to make financial savings and it would be difficult for Homerton to justify continuing to staff to existing levels.

Ken presented the budget report for July 2022. Revenue income was currently showing a positive variance of £51,000, but Governors noted that £38,000 of this was a deposit. Under revenue expenditure there was a variance of -£14,000, largely because more teaching assistants had been needed than had been anticipated. The total revenue variance was £36,000; with the £38,000 deposit subtracted, the budget was close to balancing. Governors noted that this was encouraging given that the 2022-23 budget predicted a deficit of £60,000. Further updates would be brought later in the year.

## 10. Review of the Year

Ken reminded Governors that the July meeting usually included a review of the year, a Post It note-based exercise if meeting in person. Given that it was not practical to run such an exercise over Zoom, he invited all Governors to e-mail their comments and suggestions, either to him and Alex or to all Governors if willing to share them more widely.

All  
Governors

Ken shared his key observations:

- It had been possible to hold only one Governing Body meeting face to face this year; the meeting had been both valuable and enjoyable. He hoped that more Governing Body meetings could take place from September. Committee meetings were likely to continue on Zoom for the time being.
- Governors had taken a number of important decisions, for example on fees, on staff appointments and on building works.
- Governors had received good levels of information and had been active in questioning and discussion.
- Surabhi had led useful training sessions on safeguarding and the Prevent duty.
- All staff had done an excellent job in adapting to the challenges of Covid whilst keeping the Centre fully open.

Governors joined Ken in thanking staff for all of their efforts and achievements during the year. Alex thanked Governors for all of their support and input.

## 11. Data Reports

Mitali presented reports from Target Tracker summarising progress against age-related expectations made by children in the nursery. Governors noted that:

- Whilst Ofsted no longer focussed on data, staff at Homerton were continuing to explore how data could be of help in monitoring children's progress.
- Development Matters, the Government's early years curriculum, now grouped children into three broad age bands: 0-3 years, 3-4 years and Reception. Within each of these bands there were three categories: beginning, working within and secure.
- The data was based on assessments made by staff against a set of detailed descriptor statements in Development Matters and showed improvements made by 0, 2, 4 or 6 steps. Staff at Homerton did not use the categories of 1, 3 or 5 steps.
- Given the broad age bands, even small increments could indicate significant progress.

Governors discussed the four reports:

- An age-related expectation summary report for nursery children – Overall, a significant number of children were showing as below age-related expectations, including 47 of 71 pupils for writing and 45 of 71 pupils for number and for numerical patterns. Mitali explained that this was thought to be because at this point in the year, Target Tracker assessed every child over the age of 4 by the Reception criteria, even though they were still at nursery. Both Mitali and Alex emphasised that the assessment of below age-related expectations for so many

children did not accord with their actual experience of children in the nursery. They would be reviewing the usefulness of this data for future years.

- A progress breakdown report for prime areas – This was more positive, showing most children progressing by 2, 4 or 6 steps. A very small number of children had progressed by 0 steps. Staff had looked into these and there were clear explanations, including some data relating to children who had left Homerton.
- A progress breakdown report for literacy and numeracy – This was also positive, although with fewer children progressing by 6 steps than in the prime areas. Mitali noted that she would be investigating in more detail the 14 children shown as making 0 steps of progress in number and in numerical patterns.
- A chart comparing overall attainment at the beginning and end of the school year for autumn-born, spring-born and summer-born children; for children with English as an additional language; and for children with special educational needs – Governors noted that it was pleasing to see that all groups had progressed. However, the improvement of summer-born children was less than for autumn- and spring-born children, particularly in communication and language. Governors discussed whether this was inevitable, given that even a few months were a significant proportion of young children’s lives, meaning that summer-born children had had less opportunity to speak, listen, share books etc. Mitali noted that she would be considering whether Homerton should focus more on summer-born children. Governors suggested that parents could also be supported to help their summer-born children at home, for example by giving them materials to use. However, Governors also noted that the emphasis of the new EYFS framework was very much on embedding and review of learning, rather than hurrying children forwards to the next level.

**Mitali**

Governors thanked Mitali for her work in preparing these reports. They agreed that it would be important to keep the usefulness of Target Tracker and data collection under review during the coming year. It was noted that data for individual children was not shared with parents: it was not felt that this would be helpful, given the level of interpretation and the caveats that would also need to be provided. Within the nursery, Governors also commented that the data could be more useful to concentrate on the progress made by individual children during the year, rather than considering large data groups.

**Mitali/  
Alex**

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

**13. Dates of Future Meetings**

It was agreed that future Governing Body meetings would be held at 7.30pm on:

- Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022
- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022
- Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023
- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.