

## **INTRODUCING HOMERTON'S GOVERNORS**

### **Ken Ong – Chair of Governors, Co-opted Governor & Lead Governor for Safeguarding**

As a Professor at the University of Cambridge and Consultant Paediatrician in Cambridge, I have much experience of chairing committees at local, national and international levels, am kept up to date with latest issues and training in safeguarding children, and have research interests in early childhood growth and nutrition.

My four children had the good fortune to attend Homerton Nursery School, which gave them a great start on their educational journeys to become confident and inquisitive learners.

### **Tandy Harrison – Local Authority Governor & Chair of the Curriculum Committee**

I trained as a primary teacher and taught locally for twelve years, spending four years teaching in a local authority nursery school in Cambridge. I later specialised in supporting children with additional needs, particularly those with severe communication impairment and/or autism. I set up and ran an autism outreach service for a local charity, supporting pre-school children and their families.

I have two children with additional needs and was chair of governors at a local special school for four years.

### **Alex Pearson – Head of Centre**

I started my teaching career working in primary education in London. I then moved to Australia, and then Indonesia, where I worked in both primary and international schools as well as teaching English for the British Council.

I returned to Cambridge when I had my children, who both came to Homerton. I was very lucky to get a job teaching here thirteen years ago and became the Head in September 2018.

### **Ning Zhang – Staff Governor**

I moved to Cambridge with my husband and two children a few years ago. After working in the financial services industry in Dublin for 15 years, I joined my friend's online eco toy business as the Head of Finance and Operations for a few years. I have recently joined Homerton on a part time basis, and run the Messy play session on Friday morning with another colleague. I'm a member of the Cambridge Canoe club and I've been volunteering in the past few years to run the very popular kids' summer club. I enjoy paddling upstream to Grantchester to soak in the tranquillity of the countryside, but I also love the fun of navigating between the punting boats at the Backs.

### **Nelli Ferenczi-Houlden – Parent Governor**

I am a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Brunel University of London. As a cross-cultural social psychologist, I am interested in understanding how culture shapes our identities, close relationships, and how we engage with others. Separately, my research also seeks to understand why and how people behave in antisocial and prosocial ways online. Specifically, some of my research investigates the impact of online harms for young people. I have sat on an advisory board for project which investigated experiences of young people with online harms and their perceptions of support within school settings, with the aim of improving the types of support that young people can access.

I am also passionate about access and participation, and this is reflected in my professional memberships and duties. I have led an Awarding Gap committee within my Department (Psychology) to assess the Awarding Gap within our BSc programme and develop a proposal of implementations. I am also a member of our College Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion committee, and have worked on a number of projects to address these issues for our students and staff.

On a personal level, I have a multicultural background and speak three languages with my son, who was incredibly fortunate to start attending the Nest in September 2025. It was clear from the very first home visit that Homerton is a wonderful nursery which provides excellent care and play-based learning opportunities for all children in a way which cultivates a strong sense of agency, confidence, and flourishing. As a governor, my aim is to support staff to continue their superb work.

### **Eirini Gkouskou – Parent Governor**

I am an Academic of Early Years and Primary Education at the Institute of Education, University College London (IOE-UCL). Before joining the Department of Learning and Leadership at IOE UCL I was a Senior Academic at the University of East London and Manager at formal and non-formal educational organisations. I am an active member of GEM (Group for Education in Museums) and a Deputy Editor of the Journal of Education in Museums (JEM). Also, I am a member of CASTME, an organisation passionate about furthering STEM-related education in its broadest sense for all.

I was fortunate for my son to join Homerton and explore play based learning with such amazing learning opportunities.

### **Rob Payne – Parent Governor**

I live locally and am the Archivist/Historian at Addenbrooke's Hospital. I have a daughter who is in the West Room and who was previously in the Nest and a son who will hopefully join Homerton in the next few years.

We have had exceptional support from Homerton and I would like to contribute to the Centre's work. My daughter has additional educational needs, which is one of the reasons my wife and I chose Homerton for her: the provision at the Centre is excellent and the support that we have received since she has been there has been outstanding. I believe that my experience of navigating the, not always straightforward, world of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities might add something to the Governing Body. I have always believed in inclusive education and would like to work with Homerton while the Centre continues to provide an accepting and adaptable learning environment for all.

### **Robert Rawlinson – Parent Governor**

I have lived in Cambridge for over 10 years, am a father of three young children (my daughter attends the nursery), and live on Holbrook Road, giving me a strong personal and practical connection with the nursery and its community.

Professionally, I bring over 30 years of senior leadership experience running UK and international organisations, including strategic planning, operational performance management, financial oversight, and people leadership. I have held CEO, Managing Director and Director roles across technology, education-adjacent and commercial sectors, and have extensive experience in finance, governance, risk, human resources, technology and organisational improvement.

I believe this background aligns directly with the responsibilities of the Governing Body, particularly in supporting strategic direction, holding leadership to account, reviewing performance data, and ensuring financial stewardship. I also bring experience implementing new technologies, including AI-driven improvements, which may support future development priorities.

I am committed to contributing positively, collaborating constructively, and helping ensure that Homerton continues to provide the highest-quality learning environment for all children.

### **Bernie Cafferkey – Co-opted Governor**

I trained as a primary school teacher with a specialism in Early Years. I have also completed the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination (NASENCO) and more recently passed the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL). I currently teach East Blue and Purple class and am the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) for Homerton alongside being one of Homerton's Designated Persons for Child Protection and Domestic Abuse Leads.

Two of my children had a great start to their journey in education at Homerton and I first joined the staff team in 2004.

### **Isa Garcia Crestani – Co-opted Governor**

I was first involved with Homerton as a parent coming to Messy Play. My son attended Homerton and now my daughter is currently going to Homerton every day, and like her brother, she absolutely loves it.

I am an entrepreneur with a BA in Marketing and an EMBA in Fashion Businesses. I have worked for big retailers such as Revlon Cosmetics, Carrefour and the Walt Disney Company, in Latin America, Spain and the UK. Due to Covid I had to close my handmade knitwear business (like many small businesses have had to), but that also has made me re-direct my passion for baking and catering, and has launched a Homemade Baking Business (Lima's Kitchen Homemade).

I think that adaptability, being pro-active and always looking to innovate is a big part of who I am as a person, as a parent, and what I can also bring as a parent governor.

### **Sameer Garyali – Co-opted Governor**

I work full-time for GlaxoSmithKline, in Ware, as a Senior Engineering Project Manager where I manage multi-million pound budgets for projects, I line manage a team and I am also responsible for the site's recruitment process. I believe that my extensive experience of project and resource management is valuable to my role as a Governor at Homerton.

### **Chris McNicholas – Co-opted Governor**

As a local resident and parent of three young children (one who has been to Homerton, one who is currently at Homerton and one who will join in the future), I am keen to give something back and contribute to the school's development and long-term prosperity.

I am able to offer the voice of parents to support the governing body. We have had a fantastic experience of Homerton to date and our children have thrived from the support of the staff and setting and I very much wish to support this continue for other children and families. There are likely to be challenging decisions for the Centre to make over the coming years and I am keen to help the team navigate these and ensure that the child and family voice remains central to the vision.

I would also bring the experience and skills I have developed through my career in the NHS and, in particular, the past few years in my role as Deputy Project Director for the Cambridge Children's Hospital based at Addenbrooke's. The Children's Hospital vision aims to consider the "whole child" and "whole community" when providing care and I believe these concepts align well with the delivery of education and am passionate to support this happening in my local area. Core to this is diversity and inclusion which I would seek to be at the forefront of the school's strategies and decision making.

My experience of capital funded projects in health will also offer another skillset to support develop the best facilities at the school. This, along with my previous experience in academia, consulting and wider NHS Transformation roles, I believe, will be beneficial in a role as a governor in a range of areas e.g. strategy development and delivery, operational performance management, business case and financing etc.

#### **Mick Patel – Co-opted Governor**

I became a co-opted governor when I was a sub-postmaster of a local post office. I was also a teacher for ten years in Cambridgeshire.

Having lived locally for 30+ years, I have many connections with the nursery and its community. My two boys attended the nursery and enjoyed their time at Homerton, and we also have many friends whose children attended Homerton Nursery School.

#### **Mitali Peckham – Co-opted Governor**

I trained as a primary teacher and taught for a number of years across the foundation stage. I currently teach a 2.5 day class at Homerton. In this role, I have trained student teachers and act as the Centre's lead for Information and Communications Technology and for pupil assessment.

My own four children attended Homerton Nursery School, so I also have much experience of a parent's perspective at Homerton.

#### **Elizabeth Head – Associate Member**

As a parent of two children who have recently attended Homerton Early Years Centre, I am keen to continue my connection with the nursery and support it in its role of providing such an amazing start to a child's educational journey. My career as an Occupational Therapist has required me to develop good communication and team working skills which I feel will be helpful as I become part of the Governing Body at Homerton.

#### **Surabhi Singh – Associate Member**

My daughter currently attends Homerton and my son, now 13, also previously attended. I am a General Practitioner partner and have experience in paediatrics. My job involves caring for children's physical and psychological health, along with supporting parents and families to fulfil their social and educational needs. I have extensive training in child safeguarding.