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.

Mitali Peckham – Head of Centre

I trained as a primary teacher and taught for a number of years across the foundation stage. Before becoming Head in September 2026, I taught a 2.5 day class at Homerton. In this role, I trained student teachers and acted 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.

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.

Caroline Doyle – Parent Governor

I am a local parent with two young boys and my family has lived in Cambridge since 2022. My eldest joined Homerton in January 2025 and we have found it to be an incredibly nurturing and inspiring environment. As a family, becoming part of the wider Homerton community has enriched all our lives and I'm passionate about preserving and promoting this special place and ensuring that future cohorts of children and their families can continue to get as much out of Homerton as we have.

In my professional life, I work in marketing and communications and have over 15 years' experience in PR, managing media engagement and developing brand-building campaigns for consumer brands. I know how powerful story-telling and well crafted comms can be when it comes to message delivery and to reaching and engaging audiences. I hope these skills will be useful when it comes to supporting the brilliant work of the Homerton team.

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.

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.

Haidee Clarke – Co-opted Governor

I completed a BSC in Psychology at Lancaster University and then I completed a PGCE at the Faculty of Education in Cambridge. My initial teaching experience was in KS1 and I was phase leader and member of the SLT at a primary school. I then moved down into Early Years and became EYFS lead in addition. I have taught in both reception and nursery classes.

I took a break from teaching when I adopted my son and when I did return to work, I was fortunate enough to secure a position in the pre-school that he attended and spent lots of valuable time with him whilst also acting as deputy manager and then joint manager of the setting.

I started at Homerton Early Years Centre in September and have been struck by how welcoming the staff and the whole school community have been. I look forward to supporting the Governing Body.

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 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.

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.