

Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 28th April 2021 at 5.30 p.m., via Zoom

Present:

Glynis Alexander (Chair)
Matt Bunday (Associate)
John Draper
Karen Gange
Peter Hilditch
Caroline Humphries
Nicola Hunt
Harry Kutty (Head)

In Attendance:

Ian Creswell (Item 6)
Siobhan Dodds (Item 4)
Dave Gill (Item 7)
Steve Godwin (Item 5)
Michelle Burt, Clerk to Governors

Apologies:

Chris Dancer
Deb Sutton
Warren Thomas

52/21 **Declaration of Pecuniary or Business Interests**

Action

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

53/21 **Minutes of the Meeting dated 2nd December 2020**

Governors AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th February 2021 as a true record of the meeting, which were SIGNED accordingly by the Chair.

54/21 **Matters Arising**

All Matters Arising were either complete or on the Agenda.

55/21 **Teaching & Learning/Curriculum Update**

The Head introduced Siobhan Dodds to the meeting to talk about the Aim High programme. The Head commented that the Aim High programme is what other schools are called a 'Covid Catch up programme' but at Cantell they don't believe that students need to catch up, they believe in the aspiration and progress of students. The Head added that they are not just looking at the disadvantages from the pandemic, but how students have been advantaged by the pandemic.

The Head said that there is data coming through showing that lots of students have done really well through remote learning and have been working really hard with their parents and teachers' support. There are also some students who weren't so involved in the classroom, who have excelled in remote learning and they are looking to see how they can bring their confidence back in the classroom. Aim High is also about extra-curricular, trips, visits and experience, which they have always prided themselves on and they are committed to widening this experience, so students can go on to lead a successful and productive life.

Siobhan said that the Aim High Programme has three phases: phase 1 and 2 during the current year and phase 3 from September.

Phase 1 (8th March – 1st April) started as soon as school returned after lock down to re-familiarise students with systems and structures and to help them reengage in learning, the Cantell curriculum, the House system and extra-curricular activities.

Stage 2 (19th April – 16th July) will provide additional opportunities to allow students to accelerate their progress throughout the curriculum, whilst any gaps are identified.

Action

Stage 3 (6th September – onwards) is aimed at deepening learning across a broad range of experiences, both in and beyond the classroom.

Siobhan explained that on the return to school, just before Easter, staff started to RAG rate their students, to ensure that learning is supportive of their needs and three intervention groups were identified: Red, Amber and Green.

Initially the core subjects were RAG rated (English, Maths & Science), and the other subjects by the 7th May.

Other ways the RAG rating information is being used is:

- Afternoon tea for Faculties to identify strategies for use inside the classroom.
- CPD for staff on the 20th April to look at S Plan changes.
- Student assemblies
- Student Voice
- Blue post it notes to check for understanding and attack words.

The Chair said it would be interesting to see the percentage rates for the amber and green groups and where students are compared to normal times. The Head responded that they have already been looking at this information and will bring it to the next WGB.

Agenda
9.6.21

The Head commented that it is a relatively positive picture in relation to the Red group and overall indications are that the number of students they will be working with as an SLT are manageable.

The Head said that one of the most effective strategies for closing the gap is moving the seating plans, but we are unable to do this at the moment because of contract tracing. The Head added they are trying to do this with one hand tied behind their back, but staff are up for the challenge, along with the SLT and Middle Leaders.

The Head thanked Siobhan for her presentation and for what she is doing with the team.

A Governor asked about the evolution of the RAG ratings and whether this will be a regular item to review the success of what is being done. The Head said that it will be reviewed, but not on a regular basis, because they don't want to spend too much on it, as it is a lot of work and staff know what is happening behind the scenes. It will be reviewed at regular intervals, but the focus will be in the classroom.

The Head said that he did a learning walk today and the questioning was exceptional and he was able to see which students were getting it and the teacher making adjustments for those who weren't.

A Governor asked if this is because you know what you are doing is having an impact. The Head agreed, adding that the process will be formative and will be adapted as they go along.

56/21 **Assessment of Remote Learning from a Student/Staff perspective**

Steve Godwin outlined the general principles of remote learning, which included providing students with a curriculum that is high quality, safe and one that aligns as closely as possible with in school provision, providing students with the support they need to master the curriculum and make good progress.

Steve added that the current position is that there are still some students isolating before returning to school, some are struggling to get back into the country from abroad and 28 students out of school self-isolating. Home learning will be maintained as long as there are students out of school. Steve believes they are at a stage where there are no students unable to access remote learning and 330 laptops have been provided, so students have access. This is something that continues to be monitored.

Each subject has a google classroom and students have access to class work and homework. Students follow their normal timetable and good quality resources are available. Steve commented that staff have spent a lot of time this year doing intensive training and a lot of work was carried out in IT lessons with students on the use of IT.

A Parent Voice meeting was held in the autumn, devoted to remote learning, attended by 40 parents. There was high praise for home learning, with some really valuable feedback. Some parents really appreciated flexible learning, although some really didn't like it and preferred a normal timetable – all this was taken on board and in January, over 400 students took part in an online survey

Steve informed Governors that data has been collected every week and on average, 55% of subjects were completed, but when weighted, this equated to 67% of tasks set across both key stages. Although PP & SEN were disproportionately lower.

They want to take as much as possible from remote learning, because they have learnt so much and want to see what they can go further with and what bits they can continue to use, such as remote parents evenings, which worked really well. As a result, teachers have been issued with a post card to write down one big idea from remote learning to work on over the summer, the card will be posted back to them in the autumn term, to see how they have done.

A Governor commented that he agrees with the point about what happens next, as the last year has brought things forward in IT and he is happy that we are not going backwards and the list of things that worked is good. He also wonders when Governors will be able to get back into school for Learning Walks. There are definitely some good things that have come out of lockdown and he is encouraged by what has been said. Steve agreed that social interaction is preferable, but they would be mad to disregard a lot of what has been learnt in terms of IT.

The same Governor agreed that the last year has caused a lot of improvement in IT generally, such as this meeting, and it is out there now, so we might as well use it.

The Head thanked Steve for his hard work in leading remote learning – he believes that this was the right direction to go in. In terms of what we are learning and what we want to keep and the impact this will have on students and staff – staff have been asked to provide feedback. Steve's role with home learning will continue because of those students who have to work from home.

57/21 Attendance & Behaviour

Attendance

Ian commented that there haven't been any major changes since the last meeting, and as such, is presenting the five year trend up to March. Attendance has been strong over the last five years at 94.5%, although the figures for 2019/20 were affected by norovirus. By the end of lockdown, attendance was back up to 94.5%, recovering to where they were previously and is looking really strong for the current year.

Ian referred Governors to the 2020/21 and 2019/20 figures, where the impact of Covid-19 can be seen. Attendance was normal until Christmas when the first concerns about Covid-19 were seen. From September to Christmas, attendance was stuck, with the national trend at 85%.

Governors NOTED that the year group most affected was Year 11, particularly during the norovirus outbreak and hadn't recovered. A group of students is also having an impact on the figures.

Ian informed Governors that staff engaged with families for three weeks after Easter, contacting families and getting students into school. This had some impact, although there are still three students overseas and more that are isolating at home, having just returned to the country.

Ian outlined the key areas of focus for the Enhanced Phase of engagement, with Year 10 being a priority and those students who have had the odd day off (ODO), across all years. This focus will continue until the end of term in July.

In the last week, 130 students have been spoken to and parents have been contacted, with letters being sent home. Students are not being asked to come into school if they are really ill. Ian commented that the impact has been massive in the short term, with Year 7's attendance rising massively and overall (Years 7-10) is at 97%.

In September, the attendance process will revert to what has happened over the last three years, always with a caveat around Covid.

The Chair asked if the information provide was generated especially. Ian responded that it is what they have been focussing on and they will pick out data about specific groups later on to see if there is anything specific they need to do for the next stage.

The Head commented that they have just been informed that attendance nationally is at 91%, so Cantell is above this due to the focus on getting students back into class and not the percentages.

A Governor asked whether there are many children not attending because of Covid phobia. Ian responded that there weren't any in Year 8 – 10, there is currently one in Year 7 and one in Year 11. There are a couple of others shielding, who they are having difficulty getting back into school. The Head said that this will tail off with students, but there are still a number of parents who are concerned, and getting back to normality will change this. They are pushing this and in some cases, the children are pushing as well.

Behaviour

Ian informed Governors that he hasn't provided the normal update on exclusions as there haven't been any external exclusion, until today.

Ian has been focussing on what is going well and what is having an impact on behaviour that they need to continue. Ian added that there has also been a decrease in behaviour points, at a third of where they were the previous year, with less students involved. Ian said that he is trying to work out what they are doing differently that has caused this massive improvement. Behaviour in 2019/20 was good, now it is incredible.

Ian explained that some of the reasons for this improvement include:

- Consistent seating plans.
- Staff approach – phone calls home, increased patrol.

- The right students in CAP.

Ian added that we have great students at Cantell, behaviour has improved since lockdown, apart from a few in Year 7, who have been quashed. Ian is looking forward to feedback from staff on the bits they want to keep when things go back to normal.

A Governor asked about the staff approach and whether there is any suggestion that staff are being more tolerant of children because of what they have been through – are they being more lenient on behaviour? Ian responded that he believes it is the opposite because of the clear consistent approach students know what to expect and the transition when students move from one classroom to another, means they are ready to learn – although some of this is not sustainable. Ian feels that some students realise they are better off in school, as it was hard working from home. Students aren't accruing behaviour points in the same way as before.

The Head said that this is about triangulating information and Ian is right to point out the good behaviour last year – it is exceptional now. The post it notes from staff say that they really strongly feel that the system identifies better behaviour and they are able to put in the processes to make sure this stays the same. They are not saying that everything is perfect, but these students are a minority.

58/21 Year 11 Progress Update

Dave Gill reported that the data for Year 11 is looking broadly in line, but it is more important to go through the Assessment process, which was presented at the last meeting, over the next few weeks. Dave added that they know that Year 11 students make the most progress in the last few weeks, and as a result they expect Assessment Window 2 to be better than Assessment Window 1. Everything is where they wanted it to be in Assessment Window 1, although there were around 30 students isolating at the time. Dave commented that he is pleased therefore to have Assessment Window 2 to fall back on.

This week is QA week and Dave has been working hard to make sure they are staff are allocating grades that are fair to students and ensuring that the quality of work looks the same as in previous years. Dave added that reports will be issued on Tuesday and there is a Year 11 Progress week next week, to go through the last predictions with parents. After this they go into preparations for Assessment Window 2.

Student Voice meetings have taken place and the feeling is that students like the proper exam settings, so it feels more serious and they can get in the zone to do their best. As a result, although some small rooms will be available for those that are anxious, assessments will be carried out in exam conditions.

Dave explained that after Assessment Window 2, there is a tight turnaround for teachers to mark and moderate work verification on the 18th June. There will also be a significant QA process, which has been put in place by Ofqual and the exam boards. Dave said that initially he thought that this was awful but as they are doing this anyway, on reflection, whilst there is a burden of work, it protects students, ensuring that their grades are fair and what they deserve.

Dave drew Governors attention to the CTL slide in his presentation. DC2 was before lockdown in December 2020 and most groups are now significantly above where they were, with over 70% in the yellow group. The 30% in the Amber, Pink and Red groups are mainly due to attendance issue and are a difficult group due to a combination of students being overseas and those that are anxious about Covid. Dave commented that they are doing their best to support these students so they can continue accessing work, and do their assessments.

Non-EAL Pupil Premium students are the toughest to reach and Dave said that he is pleased that 43% are in the Green group, they are doing well, but could be doing better.

Dave outlined the appeals process, commenting that there are two different strategies: students can appeal to us as a centre, which is a checking exercise, with a simple yes, no outcome. The school can then make a final appeal. The exam board will then look at the evidence provided and decide if it is a reasonable example of academic work. Dave said that this seems to be a fair and reasonable appeals process and he would have the confidence that we are able to back teachers in the grades they have awarded.

A Governor asked if they were looking at any student assessments over the QA period to make sure that work is being assessed correctly. Dave responded that they are doing a bit of both, ensuring that the process has been applied correctly and that the assessment process they said they would use has been used. This is alongside departments looking at whether the judgement of a teacher is reasonable.

The same Governor asked how the Assessment/QA will work. Dave said that every school will have to submit student work, which will be randomly QA'd – this will be at least two subjects and three students work. Dave said that he is not sure if this will happen with every exam board, but guesses that they will probably request a range of grades, which they will look at for visible differences in the quality of work and whether the schools sit significantly above or below previous cohorts.

In response to a further question, Dave confirmed that it is not guaranteed that all schools will be sampled, but all schools will have to submit and unless there is a problem, they won't know if they've been sampled or not, but should believe that they might be.

A Governor asked in relation to overall GCSE grades, will the school be looking at Assessment Window 2 mocks or across window 1 and 2 to get an average. Dave responded that they won't be looking for an average, they will be looking for the best grade from both windows and for the evidence base that shows a student can do the work. Although Dave believes that Assessment Window 2 will be when students will achieve.

A Governor commented that they have a similar system for weighting in KS2 and have had an issue about how independent a child's work is. Dave agreed, adding that they have to sign off to say that it is a student's own work. Guidance is given about using professional judgement, but one of the most challenging bits for teachers is where does the guidance stop and when are they overstepping the mark. Departments have been given the time to make sure they have got consistency across all subjects.

Chair

The Chair thanked Dave and staff for their hard work. Dave commented that he hopes the Chair and Governors can send an email to Year 11 teachers after the exams to thank them. **The Chair agreed to send the emails.**

59/21 **Governor Reappointment**

Governors APPROVED the reappointment of Glynis Alexander as a Co-opted Governor for a further four year term of office from the 17th May 2021 to the 16th May 2025.

60/21 **Headteacher Update**

The Head informed Governors that it has been amazing to see students back in school and extra-curricular clubs starting up again. The Head said that he went down to KS3

to have a look and it was great to see students taking part in extra-curricular activities and the interaction was more important than the activity itself.

The Head said they are determined to put on as many activities as possible and are working with a company called Contour Education to increase trips, visits and speakers coming into school. They will also be having a follow up event with NatWest, following the success of Careers week.

Faculties got together this week, with control measures, for their first face to face meeting since March 2020 and the Head said they are looking to see if they can risk some more of these types of interaction.

Students were asked to drop off their saliva test at a collection point set up across the city. 92% of students submitted a test before returning. The Head added that saliva testing hasn't gone well, with the new lab running into issues before Easter, meaning testing was suspended for one week for primary schools and two for Cantell, with students reverting to LFD testing for this period. The Head has worked with the DfE to confirm that only one saliva test is required and he is grateful to staff who were able to make sure tests went out.

The Options process is in place and as students couldn't visit different areas in school to look at the options they want to do, they created a virtual options booklet, with zoom breakout rooms, to allow students to meet with staff.

Dave Gill is doing an incredible job with Year 11 and it is the most robust, rigorous process and incredibly fair and the Head feels that we are ahead of the field. There was a lot of grumbling about the QA process, but Cantell is ahead of the curve.

The Head has been working closely with SCC and other Southampton schools to make a group decision that Year 11 students will finish face to face teaching at May half term and will then have the opportunity to participate in activities with local colleges on a 'flying start' programme. Vulnerable students will also be encouraged to still attend school, with staff working with them until they need to.

The Head informed Governors that Transition Week has been a huge success, with Year 6 students attending Cantell for five days. Last year this was done virtually, but this year they are planning to open the doors for three days, if they can safely. Siobhan Dodds is leading on this and has other contingency plans in the pipe line.

The Head said that walking around school, he is incredibly proud to be back and staff are highly motivated and know what is being asked of them. Students seem extremely happy and in most of his conversations with them, they say they are very happy. The Head added that they are in a good position, although this half term has been extremely challenging for students. SLT make sure they stand alongside colleagues and staff have the opportunity for their 'magic wand' moments, when they can say what they would like, if it's possible.

A Governor said that there are a lot of things that can be taken from the last year. Her daughter in Year 11 thinks that virtual assemblies are working really well and students save a lot of time going to and fro to assemblies and the content can be discussed better in Lesson A. The Head said that he also enjoys the online assemblies and to be able to do this live across the school is important.

Another Governor asked with Transition being reduced, is there still a place for SEND. The Head confirmed that there is a place for SEND and the LA has devised a system for schools to get together to discuss any issues and to exchange information. Rachel Bridges will also be organising individual visits to school for these youngsters.

The Chair thanked the Staff Governor, Karen and asked her to pass on her thanks to the other Year Leaders and commented that without the Year Leaders, supported by SLT, students would be in a far worse place.

Karen said that she will pass this on, but thanked SLT herself for their support – staff feel really listened to. She added that the students have been brilliant and it is lovely to see their eagerness to be back at school.

The Chair continues to meet with the Head every week and she also met with staff in March, over two days – six teachers and then a number of office staff, cover supervisors and TAs. The Chair added that she has promised to catch up with the again at the end of term to see if anything has changed.

The Chair has also sent emails to the members of staff who contributed to the virtual Careers evening to say thank you.

The Chair thanked Governors for what they are doing and to the Head and SLT, commenting that they couldn't ask for a better set of people and it has been wonderful listening to them as a Governing Body.

62/21 **Any Other Business**

The Head thanked Governors, commenting that it is a community effort and it is great to be part of the Aspire Community Trust. They have formed something special and wonderful and it is great working alongside them.

63/21 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 9th June 2021, 5.30 p.m. via zoom

That concluded the business of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.32 p.m.

Page No	Minute No	Action Point	Responsibility	Deadline
2.	55/21	RAG rating for Amber & Green groups – compared to pre-lockdown.	SLT	WGB Meeting 9.6.21
7.	58/21	Chair to email thanks from Governors to Year 11 teachers.	Chair	Complete