

Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 18th January 2023, 5.30 p.m.

Present:

Harry Kutty (Head)
Glynis Alexander (Chair)
Julian Bryant
John Draper (arrived at 5.55 p.m.)
Peter Hilditch
Nicola Hunt

In Attendance:

Dave Gill, Assistant Headteacher
Steve Godwin, Assistant Headteacher
Michelle Burt, Clerk to Governors

Apologies:

Matt Bunday
Caroline Humphries

39/23 Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests

Action

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

40/23 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th December 2022

Governors APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 7th December 2022 as a true record of the meeting, which were SIGNED accordingly by the Chair.

41/23 Matters Arising

Governors NOTED that all Matters Arising from the last meeting were either complete or on the agenda.

42/23 Update on IAG and Careers including Brian Lightman SIP visit on the 22nd November 2022

Careers and IAG

Steve Godwin explained that CEIAG stand for, Careers and Education Information, Advice and Guidance, adding that the vision for the area is for every student to develop a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities available to them post 16 and to make informed decisions at every stage of their education and career path journeys choosing pathways that are right for them.

Steve explained the provision at KS3, which includes:

- Dedicated CPSD lessons once a week during the Spring term.
- Cantell Careers week, supported by NatWest, which was a big success the previous year. Steve explained that two of the dates during careers week are now strike days and there is a meeting tomorrow to look at the programme.
- Cantell Careers Fair at Southampton University.
- Apprenticeship Presentations.
- Future Focus day and Options Evening in March for Year 9.
- Access to the Careers Advisor in school.

The Chair commented that this is fantastic and asked what happens with EAL students. Steve responded that they are supported to access the provision in KS4 and get extra support in class.

Steve informed Governors that other curriculum initiatives also take place such as visit to LifeLab at Southampton General Hospital for Year 8 students and events in Maths where students can talk about their career choices.

The Head commented that the extra support for EAL students comes from the languages team who support students at events such as the Future Focus day to make sure they receive bespoke information.

Steve added that the Learning 2 Learn students also get access to these events in groups.

The Chair asked about missing students, such as those that were off sick. Steve responded that it can be difficult if they are absent on the day, but they do catch ups and other one off days, but it is definitely an area for development. The Head added that students do miss out on the Future Focus day if they are absent, but staff go out of the way to make sure students catch up where they can, although the biggest challenge is pulling staff back from doing so much more. The biggest thing is to encourage positive attendance as attendance has been very challenging in the last two/three months.

Steve explained that they are down to the last approach to work experience, with 25 students still needing to sign up for work experience, although some need to have their hands held to get work experience arranged for them. Some students find the process daunting.

Dave Gill added that it is no coincidence that a lot of this provision takes place in the Spring term and a lot of areas will be covered in lessons, so students only miss out on the event on the day.

The Staff Governor commented that engaging students in lessons for careers has been great and this works around the issue of students not doing this all on one day. The Head added that the EMPOWER skills are also be integrated across the school.

Steve outlined the provision for KS4, which includes some of the same content as listed for KS3, but also includes:

- CPD Empower Days.
- Lesson A Careers Lessons.
- Every student receives a Taster Day at a College of their choice. EAL students receive two or more.
- College Open Evenings.
- Work Experience.
- Apprenticeship Shows.

The Chair commented that a lot of schools are having issues with getting students to other places. The Head responded that it is not a money issue, it's the lack of bus drivers able to provide this service. **The Chair also commented that a lot of parents can't afford to pay for trips.**

Steve informed Governors that a lot of colleges came in over the summer for Year 10 and at the start of Year 11. These are local colleges, but also Sparsholt, Fareham, Brokenhurst and Totton. These colleges presented assemblies and students are pushed to attend open evenings.

Steve explained that the aims for work experience is that every Year 10 student attends, but there is a small minor students who aren't suitable to attend – those that can't go out will be provided with work experience in school. Governors NOTED that last year 85% of students went on work experience and the goal this year is for 100% to attend, although there are around 12 who say they don't want to go. Students are out for a week and some companies offer different dates.

A Governor asked whether they were having difficulty finding employers who want to take students. Steve responded that it is better this year as the situation is improving. **The Governor commented that from an employer's point of view there is a reluctance to bring in work experience students due to GDPR and Health and Safety and it is difficult to get it signed off.** Steve agreed, adding that EDP have a big database of employers who are willing to do it.

The Head commented that behaviour is another barrier and some employers have had to send students back to school because of their behaviour, but since Covid there has been a change and thanks to Steve, we are in the best position so far.

Steve explained about the Year 11 IAG Day in September when students write their personal statements. Students are off timetable for this day and work in small groups with colleges for one lesson. These are small sessions and students who find this difficult are able to engage.

A Governor asked whether the colleges come into to school. Steve confirmed that they do and that this year was on a more personal basis, rather than all students being in the main hall. This is followed up with a Mock Interview day again with outside organisations including Deloittes, and students receive 15 minute interviews.

The same Governor commented that Governors have been involved in the past and it is fantastic for young people and invaluable for sharing how to present themselves. Steve agreed, adding that the last day was really successful. Steve added that this is followed up by targeted college meetings for EAL students and hard to reach students. The head explained about a student who this had worked for about students with auditory issues who have someone attend these sessions with them.

A Governor asked about CV writing. Steve explained that students do this during the IAG day. **The Governor asked whether people come in to give advice on CV writing** Steve confirmed that this happened with employers such as NatWest who inform students about what they look for in a CV.

Brian Lightman, SIP Report

Steve highlighted some quotes from Brian Lightmans report of his visit to school in November. The Head explained that Brian had been very involved in careers and had been asked to carry out an audit on the school's provision. Brian wrote a very pleasing statement, saying that the provision provided for students goes above and beyond. Brian was happy that what they are providing is more than other schools and that they meet the eight criteria laid out in the Gatesby Foundations eight ways in which schools should be providing careers advice and guidance.

The Head added that Brian said that the school is meeting these criteria in an exceptional way and it is very important that Brian audit this area as he has been so involved in careers.

DFE Destination Data

Steve explained that this is one of the school performance criteria. The DFE had recorded that 89% of students were attending employment, education or training and that there were five students who they classed as NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Steve informed Governors that from 2020 they had their own data and were able to access better information to account for student destinations and of the students identified by the DFE as NEET, by the following September, they were attending college and two had moved abroad, so Cantell's figure was at 94%. The students whose destinations were unknown were all from the Roma community.

The Head added that Brian Lightman had advised that the school performance data should be taken with a pinch of salt and the Head is happy that the school's data is more robust. 94% is accurate, but still not good enough as they don't want to have any NEETs. The main aim is for students in training and education are sticking to it.

Steve explained that the 2021 data is not published yet, but they believe it to be at 95%, although the data lags by two years and includes nine NEETs and three unknowns from the Roma community. The data for 2022 has been released by the LA and for the spring term there are nine unknowns out of 30, so the percentage might be slightly better. Andy Paterson is currently working with these nine students, but there is only so much they can do.

A Governor asked that in the last two/three years data, is the level of NEETs normal and although there is only so much they can do, did Brian Lightman suggest anything and if not, is this the level of NEETs they have to accept. The Head responded that there is a learning barrier and once students leave there is always a challenge. Steve added that he would like to get to 100%, but realistically there will always be NEETs, so it about catching and engaging students earlier.

The Chair commented that the 95% of students is important, but they can only do so much for the other students.

Steve outlined the areas for development, which included;

- Being more engaged with some students. The Head commented that this needs to be done with the leader of the subject area and Steve is working closely with these members of staff.
- Feedback from work experience and how students are finding it, which would be useful. The Head commented that this is important across the school and one of the things they haven't done.

A Governor asked in terms of early engagement, Parents Evenings are now online. Is there any scope for parents to meet with careers advisors. Steve agreed that this has been lost, although they do have parents evenings when EBP come into talk about what is involved in work experience. Steve added that he thinks maybe they should provide this and is something they can talk about at the Parent Voice meeting on the 7th February.

The Head commented that this needs to be built into existing evenings when parents are coming in, perhaps they need to sit down and discuss how much parents are coming in to school in Year 7 and 8 compared to during Year 9 and 10 and compared to pre-Covid.

Steve informed Governors that they have been linking the curriculum to careers to make students aware of the issue and to make links. There are some clear curriculum areas where there is a need to build on this and co-ordinate to include information.

The Chair asked whether parents are invited in to talk about careers. Steve agreed that they need to tap into this source and will speak about it at the next parent voice meeting.

The Chair said that it is important to make this a wide area of information or students. Another Governor added that it is encouraging parents that they don't need to have an exciting job to be able to come in to do this – everybody's jobs are interesting.

A Governor asked about the 1:1 careers sessions with the advisers and whether it is well attended. Steve replied that it isn't in KS3, but this may be down to capacity

and not being well advertised. In KS4 it is better attended and students have Andy Paterson, the Careers Advisor and another one from Solent University. **Action**

Steve explained that students' ability to write CVs and personal statements are none existent and they need to pick up their game on this. **A Governor commented students could be asked to write reflection pieces when they come back from work experience.** Steve replied that they do this just before they go out and then an assessment on what they have done – they also complete journals.

The Chair commented that it about allowing these students who have been out, to talk to younger students about their experiences. The Head said perhaps they should have a personal record of achievement.

The Chair added that it is important that all students get to do work experience.

IAG and Careers Policy

Governors APPROVED the IAG and Careers Policy.

43/23 **Attendance and Behaviour Update**

The Head informed Governors that in Ian Creswell's absence due to illness, some areas have been reorganised temporarily, such as Attendance and Behaviour, which Dave Gill is looking after.

Attendance

Dave explained that the year started really well, above national average according to the DfE Attendance dashboard, which runs two weeks behind. Dave informed Governors at the end of last term attendance was at 90.7% in line with the National Average and in the last two weeks of term it had gone up to 92.6%.

Dave explained that in the last two weeks attendance had gone down to 89.9%, but is now back up and in line with the national average.

A Governor asked whether there is more general illness around and is it more of a pull on students coming in or staying off through illness. Dave responded that the school's attendance people know their students and families, students historic attendance and their patterns of behaviour and it is about their relationships built up with students and their families. The Had added that they have spoken to the Year Leaders about this and having 1:1 contact rather than sending out letters.

A Governor asked if there is any feeling that people are taking any extra time off. Pre-pandemic people just got on with it if they had a cold, now people don't want to risk coming in – is there any evidence that parents are acting any different that pre-pandemic. The Head responded that this isn't really about Covid anymore, it is the flu and respiratory illnesses, with students taking two weeks of to recover.

The Staff Governor asked to what extent had attendance been affected by students going abroad on holiday. Dave responded that it is slightly less now than historically because of a more stable body of students. The Head added that last year there were a lot of holidays because people were deciding to visit family after Covid. Each case is looked at on an individual basis and if they aren't authorised, but parents don't receiver a penalty notice – it is about the conversations with parents.

Dave commented that it is important for Governors to be aware of the introduction f the Education Neglect rules as school staff can be responsible for this neglect and have to have done everything they can. Time was spent last term making sure that everything had been done and a plan put in place to support students back into school.

PEX

Dave explained at in line with national figures, they can have 1.8 PEX a year, which they are tracking alongside. Schools of different sizes have different allowances and the number of PEX is a percentage of the number of students at a school.

Dave said they are tracking along just below the national average and any PEX that does happen, they have exhausted all the support put in place. Governors can be reassured that there have never been any appeals against any decisions to permanently exclude students. The Head said that any permanent exclusions have always been due to a risk to the health & safety to students and staff.

The Chair said that Governors are aware of this and they have all been part of the process at one time or another. Another Governor that from the PEX meetings he has sat on, he also recognises this.

External Suspensions

Dave informed Governors at this point, half way through the academic year, they are in line with last year and the previous year for External Suspensions and significantly below national figures compared to the number of students on roll. The National average is 3.9 vs the school figure of 10.8%.

Internal Suspensions

Dave informed Governors that the Reflection Room is used for internal suspensions, where students carry on with their work and if there is an escalation, further sanctions are put in place when needed. The Head explained a situation where a student used inappropriate language, which is not accepted at Cantell and this type of sanction is used to deal with these situations. Paperwork is completed and parents receive a letter and are involved in the re-education around this.

A Governor asked if someone comes to talk to these students about what they have done. The Head replied yes, students have reflection forms and they work with the appropriate person depending on what they have done, it is all about the re-education around the situation.

The Chair asked if any work has been done on repetition by particular students.

Dave confirmed that Ian Creswell tracks repeat offenders and records students who have been internally or externally suspended more than once. This enables sanctions to be tracked to see what has worked and what hasn't. This has really stepped up the work with the lowest level of language issues. The Head said in respect to repeat offenders, if there is someone who goes into the Reflection room repeatedly, they are sent to a social group, which is a model from Vermont School, so these students can be supported.

The Chair asked if there are many students in Year 9 who repeat, does it happen more in Years 7-9, or Years 10-11.

The Head explained that it is the younger ones that are more repetitive, although Year 7 is stronger since the pandemic. Years 8 & 9 display the most immature behaviour. In KS4 less of this behaviour is seen and it is contained to smaller groups of students. Year 9 is the group with the biggest issues and is reflected in the behaviour points, which are only half a page each day, with the most given to Year 9.

44/23 Year 11 updated and CTL

Year 11 Update

Dave explained that the last cohort that went through had a KS2 average of 101.5 on entry and it is the same this year as they are a very similar cohort. This year's group

is slightly weaker on entry in English and Maths, although they are pretty much the same.

The Chair asked if there is any different between male and female students. Dave explained that they were the same on entry, but there are only 150 girls and some are the most complex students. This group is a priority and staff are aware of this and that they are a priority.

Dave outlined the key target headlines for English and Maths compared to last year's final outcomes, which was an exceptional year with results being slightly better than then should be this year. Dave explained that English is down quite a lot, but they are aware of this and are doing an number of things to get to the threshold.

The Chair asked what is causing this in English. Dave explained it is about stamina and the ability for students to do as well in the second half of an exam as in the first. Dave added that the English team are brilliant, but need to translate this into results.

A Governor asked if there is another subject that also has this issue. Dave explained that it is only English because it is the longest exam and it is all about students' stamina during an exam, but they are working on this in the run up to exams. **The Governor asked if this is a new phenomenon across schools.** Dave responded that he isn't aware that it is, but can imagine it is. **The Governor asked if this is irrelevant to the level of the student.** Dave said yes, it is an issue across school.

Dave reassured Governors that they are aware of this problem and are working on it.

Dave outlined the targets for Combined Science compared to Triple Science, and although the groups are identical to last year, Combined Science is making Triple Science slightly weaker as the stronger students are taking Triple Science.

Targets are higher than last year and they are broadly in line with last year at the current time and just below in some areas and higher in others such as Chemistry and Physics.

Dave also went through the headlines for the Foundation and Vocational subjects, with vocational subjects being more variable due to the small cohort of students. Dave added that Humanities is looking very strong.

The Chair asked if the Staff Governor is seeing this coming through with his students. The Staff Governor responded that although last year was tough, he was pleasantly surprised how it turned out. It is now calmer in class this year and he suspects results will be much stronger, although he agrees that girls are still an area to flag up. Dave responded that there is still a lot of work to do with girls and there is a girls tutor group. These girls need this and it is a support group for each year.

Dave informed Governors that they are pretty much on track to be at the same point as this time last year, although there is still work to do in English and girls are still a priority.

CTL update

Dave informed Governors that he will spend more time on CTLs at the next meeting as they have changed the way that are tracked. They no longer give a CTL for homework and there has been a conscious effort to point parents towards Satchel One this year rather than CTLs.

Dave highlighted the figures and groups for students in DC2 in 2021 compared to the same cohort in 2020, compared to DC1 this year, adding that he thinks they might be out half a percentage in the main group.

All students in the gold group also get a post card and students are also being asked what rewards they would like to receive. **Action**

45/23 Updated SEF

The Head informed Governors that as there aren't any major changes to the SEF he would talk through are in the SEF that he wanted to highlight.

Attendance

The Head commented that this is a significant change for the school, as they gone from being above the national average to being at national. All the senior leaders and links have worked hard on attendance, but accept there is a balance in knowing there is only so much they can do. The Head said that he has updated the Attendance section of the SEF in light of this.

TAs

Another area that has seen a real change, is the recruitment of TAs. There is a banner outside the school building and everything has been done to try and recruit, but it has been a real challenge to the point where agencies have been used for the last three weeks, although two full time TAs have now been secured.

A Governor commented that Teaching Personnel are visiting him at his school for a chat to see if they can do something beneficial in relation to recruitment for the Trust as a whole.

The Head commented that some of the things they had started in SEND have had to be put on hold due to situation with TAs and the statutory requirements that have to be completed. Rachel Bridges is one of the best SENCOs in the city and has been working hard and the Head feels that they are in a better place, but need to focus now to make sure they get back on track. The Head said some of the things they haven't been able to do in SEND include the SEND Information Evening and intervention sessions in English and Maths – hopefully they are now in a better position to restart this.

The Chair asked how many students with EHCPs do they have. The Head responded that this is around 20 students, who work in the classroom with the other students. The Head commented that staff carry out blue-post-it notes with TAs as well.

The Chair asked if ECT students are able to do some TA work. The Head responded that this is really difficult with what the ECTs are allowed to do and the long-term situation with TAs, who need to be paid more.

A Governor asked if TAs are leaving the profession. Another Governor responded that the numbers don't add up for them and they leave the job – he has lost three good TAs since the end of the year.

Assisted Technology

The Head informed Governors that they have started to use assisted technology for students and are involved in a pilot with the Department of Education. Investment has been made into buying glasses for students with dyslexia, called Lexi Lens, which have been a revelation for our students and are making a big difference. This equipment should follow the young people for the rest of their lives. The Head added that they are trying to ensure that the equipment is for the child and that it will follow them for life, although the school cannot bank role this.

Streamer is another initiative that has been brilliant and there is other equipment that is provided for equality and access – no other school is doing this work, not even colleges and the Head said that they are pleased to be involved.

Action

A Governor asked whether this equipment can be used for access in exams. The Head confirmed that it is, particularly the Lexi Lens.

The Head commented that the SEF will be updated regularly.

46/23 **Headteacher's Update**

The Head asked Governors to be aware that the last term was the most difficult term ever – Covid was tough, but the last term was tougher. There were 16/17 members of staff off ill at one point, but they managed really well. Cover staff were block booked so school staff didn't have to be used and staff absence was also affected by their children being ill, and as long as parents were in a position to share child care, they were able to support staff.

Student absence affected attendance, which was at 72% at one point – it was really tough and staff worked very hard so make sure students weren't impacted negatively and there was a sense of comradery. To the outside world it might appear they were coping, but they were struggling.

The Head commented that it has been a good start to the calendar year and student behaviour is really strong, with a positive attitude to learning, although Year 9 is a challenging group. Behaviour points are only 10 a day for Year 9, compared to 3/4 in other year groups.

During the Subject Development weeks, staff spend time looking at subject areas with the heads of subject, looking at the progress they are making – this is really great.

Work is taking place in Humanities and SEND, which is going really well and Mark Bagust is critical to the subject development weeks.

47/23 **Chair Update**

The Chair explained that she has been into school today and sat in on an ECT meeting, which was very good. The ECTs were all in the first year and some had been at Cantell previously as PGCE students. The ECTs were able to answer questions and felt that their training is really good. The Chair said that she would like to see them again.

All schools are suffering from poor attendance at the current time and she knows that the situation with TAs and LSAs is hard, and will get more difficult.

48/23 **Any Other Business**

- New Governors – the Parent Governor election is due to take place.
- The Chair is concerned with Governor attendance at meetings and although Governors give apologies for various reasons, some meetings have only just been quorate. The Head said we need two Governors, one parent and one co-opted, perhaps with HR skills. The Chair added that it is hard to recruit.

49/23 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 15th March 2023, 5.30 p.m.

That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When

