

Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 15th March 2023

Present:

Harry Kutty (Head)
Glynis Alexander (Chair)
Julian Bryant
John Draper
Peter Hilditch
Caroline Humphries
Nicola Hunt

In Attendance:

Emma Bradshaw (Observer)
John Groves (Observer)
Claire Herridge, Deputy Headteacher
Siobhan Dodds, Assistant Headteacher
Michelle Burt (Clerk to Governors)

Apologies:

Matt Bunday
Deb Sutton

50/23 Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests

Action

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

51/23 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 18th January 2023

One amendment to the minutes was requested: Deb Sutton was shown as present at the last meeting, and should have been marked as absent.

Governors APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th January 2023 as a true record of the meeting, which were SIGNED accordingly by the Chair.

52/23 Introduction to New Governors

The Chair introduced two new Governors, Emma Bradshaw and John Groves, who had joined the meeting as observers. The Chair explained that both had been nominated as Parent Governors, but as there is also a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor, they will fill both roles. Emma and John introduced themselves to Governors.

The Chair will decide which role Emma and John are best suited to and email Governors to ask them to vote to elect the Co-opted Governor. The appointment will then be confirmed at the next meeting in May.

**Agenda Item
17.5.23**

53/23 Matters Arising

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

54/23 Subject Development Week Overview

Governors welcomed Claire Herridge and Siobhan Dodds to the meeting.

Claire explained the curriculum journey is never complete, it changes and evolves. A considerable amount of work has taken place on building the curriculum to embed the knowledge and skills students need as well as the Teaching & Learning priorities. Claire thanked Governors for monitoring their link areas and for visiting school and talking to students about their lessons and learning journeys.

Claire explained the Teaching & Learning priorities changed in September, although sequencing is continually reviewed. Governors NOTED that the three new priorities are:

1. Active Listening
2. Questioning/Dialogue
3. Subject Development Weeks

Attack words are still used in lessons, along with checking for understanding and reading, which is still a priority. Regular QA also takes place and from September 649 blue post it notes were completed during learning walks by members of staff.

Active Listening

Claire explained that Active Listening is aimed at aiding students to focus on what they are hearing in lessons by focussing on the speaker.

The Chair commented that some children like to look at something else to help them concentrate. If they are not looking at the speaker, what happens? Claire responded that the student would be asked to focus, or they would be asked a question to see that they are focused. The Head added that they would ask why they started to look out of the window, or why they started behaving in this way – it is important for everyone to look and listen carefully to be able to add their own opinion. Some young people will struggle, such as SEND students, but staff know our young people very well. The Head added that this is not punitive as students may just be finishing off some work.

Claire added that Active listening might also look different in different subjects. The Head informed Governors that they don't dictate on the default, the person in charge is the teacher, who should use their professional judgement.

Questioning and Dialogue

Siobhan explained to give students support in lessons, they have started to look at discussion, which started before half term with T&L briefings and T&L Bursts. This is twenty minutes of focussed discussion around a topic

Siobhan added that they came up with lots of different reasons why talk is important, but really wanted to focus on giving students the opportunity for discussion as the chance for discussion had significantly diminished because of the pandemic. Students need to become reaccustomed to talking in front of others again and to learn from each other and to spark conversations with other people.

A Governor mentioned that Claire, at a recent Trust meeting, had spoken about students looking at slides – is there a transition between developing good repetition for active listening, or are they the same thing. Siobhan responded that they had used this to start with as they thought it might get students going, but they haven't gone across it much yet. **The Governor asked whether looking at a diagram is useful when someone is speaking.** Siobhan responded that having an image does jog memories and it may be useful for students to have something to look at.

The Head added that it is a lot about metacognition and being really clear of what the expectations from students are.

The Staff Governor commented that he uses power points and visual aids in his lessons to encourage students to look at him and not at the screen.

Subject Development Weeks

These are weeks that were established when each subject in school has a designated week to collaborate with school leaders and to focus on their subject and what their priorities are. This includes staff feedback, staff voice and CPD time. Siobhan explained that last year this was led by the Curriculum team, but this time, it has been handed over to the Faculty Leaders to organise.

Siobhan added that with the gap for the pandemic, in 2022 they started to pull all of this together again and asked the Faculty Leaders to start looking at the curriculum and what their vision would be and to identify areas of focus.

The faculty teams find this process very useful, but wish they started in earlier, which is why there are now two sets of Subject Development weeks a year, one in November and then in February/March. At the end of the process, Faculty Leaders share their priorities with SLT and outline what support they would like to aid with their priorities and next steps.

The Chair asked the Staff Governor how this process has affected his department. The Staff Governor responded that having been through the process, he agrees it has given them the opportunity to think and come up with an action plan to get ready for the new autumn term, which has been very beneficial and useful at this stage in the cycle.

The Chair commented that the Staff Governor had also been positive about the process at the last meeting and she was glad to hear that it was still meaningful for him. The Staff Governor agreed, adding that his department had come up with a plan, which had always been left to the last minute in previous years – it has been very positive. The Head commented that there would have been a time when staff would have been told to concentrate on Year 11, this new system is right across the board now and very positive.

55/23 **Attendance & Behaviour Update**

The Head informed Governors that unfortunately, due to illness Ian Creswell was unable to attend the meeting.

Behaviour

The Head reported that behaviour continues to be really strong at Cantell, although it is a place where students can make mistakes. Behaviour points range from 2% of the student population and when it reaches over 3%, the SLT react quickly - this is from a background where behaviour was a huge challenge across the school.

Although behaviour was a challenge after the pandemic, one benefit of the pandemic has been that students are pleased to be back in school. The Head informed Governors that a lot of the systems that were started during the pandemic are still in place. The Head summarised that the trajectory for behaviour is really strong.

Attendance

The Head reported that attendance at Cantell is in line with national, but remains a huge challenge for Cantell and all school. The Head added that attendance was above National in December, but unfortunately due to a flu and respiratory infection it dropped, but is recovering slowly, although Year 9 has been the worst year for attendance.

The Head reported that unauthorised absence is lower and they always take a careful approach with parents about term time holidays – the relationships with parents is strong, but students should be in school.

The Head added that staff are pushing every day to make sure attendance is improving and they are doing some innovative things with students, such as five ways in which students can earn a voucher for 100% attendance.

56/23 Year 11 Progress/CTL Update

The Head informed Governors that unfortunately, Dave Gill was also unwell and unable to attend the meeting.

Year 11 Progress

The Head reported that Year 11 are doing really well and although today is a strike day, most of them have been in school. Attendance however continues to be an issue with Year 11, as they still seem to have a home learning mindset and staff are still dealing with a lot of post pandemic issues.

A Governor asked whether there are any national trends for students not attending on a Friday. The Head agreed this was an issue, along with Mondays. **Another Governor commented that this could be to do with parents work patterns, maybe they are at home on these days.**

The Head reported that he is meeting with parents who are asking for term time holidays and one parent said to him that her reasons for taking a holiday during term time is that life is too short. A lot of parents have valid plans but the Head still feels that young people need to be in school and learning at their correct chronological age.

A Governor asked whether there has been any kick back about the strikes. The Head responded that they are supporting one parent, who had emailed to say that she is fed up about the strikes – the Head emailed her back to say he shares her frustration. It is a difficult situation.

The Chair commented that wellbeing is an important issue and she wondered what would happen if the pandemic hadn't happened, as it's made things difficult for Year 11. The Head agreed, commenting that they are doing everything they can do fill the gaps and are throwing everything they can at Year 11.

A Governor asked how progress is going in English. The Head responded that they haven't seen any key changes, but he is grateful to the Faculty Leaders who have allowed students to have more time in English for targeted work. The challenge will be when students sit their exam, which is 2.5 hours long, which is a long time for a young person.

57/23 Finance Committee

- a) Minutes of the Finance Committee – 22nd February 2023

Governors NOTED the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 22nd February 2023.

- b) Business Continuity Plan

Governors APPROVED the Business Continuity Plan as RECOMMENDED by the Finance Committee.

a) Minutes of the Staffing Committee – 22nd February 2023

Governors NOTED the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 22nd February 2023.

b) Pay Policy

Governor APPROVED the Pay Policy as RECOMMENDED by the Staffing Committee. The Head commented that they have switched from the Hampshire pay policy and have adopted the Southampton policy, which had been sent out to staff to scrutinise with no issues identified.

59/23 **Headteacher Update**TikTok

The Head informed Governors that they need to be aware that TikTok is one of the most prominent social media platforms which brings students together in good and bad ways. In the last few weeks, schools have had to deal with physical protests, all of which have been causing issues around break times, unisex toilets and uniforms, which have been organised on TikTok.

The Head commented that Cantell is a listening school and although students are encouraged to use the toilets in social times, this isn't always possible. School rules re created around the majority, and although there are unisex and non-binary toilets, most toilets are male and female. The uniform policy is flexible and Cantell's motto is individual, but not at the cost of uniformity.

The Head informed Governors that the only students who started a protest were in Year 8 because students have been told to take their coats of in class due to the warmer weather and involve four students. What was lovely was on TikTok, other students were commenting that this was silly.

A lot of other schools have had protests, from small to more significant where the health and safety of staff and students was compromised. This didn't happen at Cantell which down to the culture of the school and the young people themselves and the staff.

Ofsted

The Head thanked Peter Hilditch and Nicola Hunt in particular and all Governors and Mark Bagust for attending the final feedback from the Inspectors. The Head added that they were very pleased with the final report. Cantell is a special place for young people to learn and for staff and everybody else – Cantell is a family who care about each other. The Head commented that this is demonstrated by a Year 11 student who escorts a Year 10 student with Special Education needs up the stairs every day.

The Head read out some of the report, adding that the Inspection was a really rigorous process which started with a ninety-minute conversation with the Lead Inspector, which included some of the SLT, who did a fantastic job. The Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, Maths, History, Art and Modern Foreign Languages.

The Head commented that the biggest support for the Inspection was from himself and Mark Bagust being Ofsted Inspectors and they correctly predicted which areas they would focus on. The deep dives were carried out on the first day and they also carried

out spot checks on other areas, including behaviour. The Leads in these areas spoke to the Inspectors about their curriculum – they were brilliant. The Head added that the challenge will be to hang onto these people, who would be Assistant Heads in other schools.

The Head said that he was also blown away by the parents who met with the Inspectors, who were really supportive. The parent feedback was exceptional with 93% out of 200 responses. The Head was also really happy with SEND, with 89% of parents feeling we support students – Cantell has a great SENCo, but all staff are aware of SEND students. Fourteen parents came in to meet with the Inspectors, which was amazing and the Inspectors were blown away by this.

There was an issue with one of the Inspectors misunderstanding what was happening in History, but they were able to show this wasn't right.

The Head said that the biggest challenge was around the English Baccalaureate, as the Government's ambition is for 90% of students to do it. The school's stance is 'best fit' for students, which would mean they cannot get outstanding because of the EBacc and not having the correct rates. The Head commented that they are currently having conversations with students about what they want to do, as we don't want to force them to take a subject they don't want to do. They respect parent and student choices.

The Lead Inspector made a phone call and the Head said he was pleasantly surprised with the judgement of Outstanding, which wouldn't have happened before. The Lead Inspector took a judgement call, although this might not necessarily happen for the next inspection.

The Vice Chair of Governors commented that this was also brought up during their meeting and Governors were able to tell the Inspectors that the school won't follow a set plan for the sake of it and will do what's best for students and as a result there will be some flexibility, with efforts made to accommodate all students. Governors were really clear on this. The Head said that it all triangulated, with everyone saying the same. The Head added that he has an ambition that students study a language, although 50% of students at Cantell are bilingual anyway.

The Head informed Governors that he is visiting the Global Academy next week to have a look at what they do – they get students into the right careers, which is his ambition for students as they will be the young people who will be applying for jobs in places such as the Solent Freeport and there will be a skills gap because of the pandemic.

The Head finished by saying that they are overjoyed with the outcome of the inspection, but will keep going – The Head thanked Governors for their support.

60/23 Chair Update

The Chair commented that she was part of the inspection feedback with Peter and Nicola, which was very interesting. As Governors they were solid and speaking from knowledge of the school. The Chair said that as Link Governors, they have this knowledge behind them, which is why it is important for all Governors to visit school, so they can see and know what is happening.

The Inspectors ran out of time and as a result the Chair met with the students they should have met with, which was wonderful. The students were open to questions and there were some Year 7 present who couldn't believe they were already half way through the year. The Chair commented that this was a mix of students from Years 7 – 10.

The Chair said as Governors, they owe a debt of gratitude to the staff and the Head for what he does. The number of students that want to come to Cantell is fantastic and shows what people think about the school, which comes from parents and students and what they say about the school and from the hardworking staff who are amazing.

Action

The Chair sent an email to the Head and school staff with her congratulations and received some very nice emails back from staff, thanking her.

61/23 **Any Other Business**

a) **Information from Inspection**

A Governor asked about the information from the inspection and where it goes afterward, it is shared with anyone? The Head responded that it goes into the Ofsted evidence base, but he had made a lot of notes from their feedback, which has been shared with staff.

The Head informed Governors that there weren't any 'next steps', but the Lead Inspector did feedback a few things. It was a huge process for staff and the next inspection is likely to be closer to two years' time and will be a Grade 5.

The Head reminded Governors to come into school for a tour, so they can get a sense of what is happening.

The Vice Chair commented that this is a great way of triangulating information and allows Governors to see what is happening so they can feed back to people such as the Inspectors – it will really give you a confidence that everyone who presents at Governor meetings are not just saying words.

49/23 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 17th May 2023, 5.30 p.m.

That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
1	52/23	New Governor categories to be confirmed at next meeting following election of Co-opted Governor by email.	Chair/ Agenda item	Next meeting 17 th May 2023