

Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 5th July 2023

Present:

Harry Kutty (Head)
Glynis Alexander (Chair)
Emma Bradshaw
Matt Bunday
Julian Bryant
John Draper
John Groves
Peter Hilditch
Nicola Hunt

In Attendance:

Michelle Burt (Clerk to Governors)

Apologies:

Caroline Humphries
Deb Sutton

79/23 Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests**Action**

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

80/23 Caversham Covenant

John Draper presented the Caversham Covenant which had come about following a Headteacher having taken her life after a negative Ofsted inspection. John explained that the remit of the covenant is to look at the quality of education in the city's four Co-operative Trusts and how they can support each other better. John outlined the four points raised in the covenant:

- That all Heads are offered supervision, with a view to broadening the offer to all leaders in due course.
- That schools see school improvement as more than just a dress rehearsal for Ofsted. The Aspire Trust works with a very good SIP and it is important that the LA recognise that SI is not just for Ofsted.
- Buddy arrangements will be put in place for those schools that are in the Ofsted window, so Heads know that there is someone available they can talk to. In the Aspire Trust a non-agenda meeting takes place every couple of weeks for Headteacher supervision. The Aspire Trust is the first Trust to have this arrangement, but there is a commitment from the other Trust to do the same.
- An understanding that following a negative Ofsted inspection, the default solution is to support the Head to address any concerns.

John also outlined other issues covered in the covenant:

- The creation of a distribution list for all Headteachers and Chairs of Governors in all four Trusts.
- A directory of staff with Ofsted experience so it is easier to contact someone to sort out a problem whilst the inspectors are still on site.

John commented that he is pleased to report that three other Co-operative Trust Boards and the main unions have agreed the proposal and the LA has embraced it. John added that it is a very powerful improvement that can be put in place, which all the Co-operative Trusts in the city are supporting.

John explained that there are some really positive things to come out of the agreement and when he spoke to Headteachers a week ago, some of the academies and 6th Forms also want to get involved.



The Vice Chair commented that this is all really positive and asked whether with everyone that is involved, if there is anything that can be done proactively with Ofsted to say what changes can be made. John responded that he should declare an interest as a lead in one of the main unions. He explained that all these conversations have taken place with Ofsted and it is more about what they can do in the meantime whilst they are waiting for the changes to take place. Everybody accepts the need for accountability and the need for scrutiny, but they also believe that there are better ways of doing things whilst waiting for change.

The Chair said that they are lucky they belong to a Trust that has come together as there is usually a lot of competition between Headteachers and from attending Trust meetings she has been surprised as how far they have come – this is now a kinship group. Everybody needs someone to support them in times of trouble and the Caversham Covenant is a way forward for the Trust.

A Governor asked whether the support would be just during Ofsted or wider than that. John responded that it will be wider than Ofsted and he hopes it will be reactive, but everybody will have a buddy, particularly during the Ofsted window.

A Governor asked whether the arrangement will be accepted by Ofsted and the DfE. John responded that he can't see why they wouldn't accept it as it is not a challenge, it is a support programme.

The Chair commented that it is better schools support each other for the better to the benefit of students, staff and parents. John agreed that this may be a catalyst as it is the first thing that the four Trusts have agreed on together and it has opened up conversations and got people working together.

A Governor said that if lots of schools are coming together, there will be strength in numbers. He asked whether there could be a situation where schools that are on their way up might pull other schools down. John responded that there will be more support on a day-to-day basis for Headteacher and there will always be someone there to support them.

The Vice Chair asked whether there is the impressions that this is not just about the concerns around Ofsted, could it also be for normal stuff and to bounce ideas off each other. John agreed with this adding that it is all about the supervision of Headteachers, which will be really helpful.

The Vice Chair added that you never know when you might need this help, so this is good.

The Chair agreed that we all need support, such as when you are a new Governor.

Governors APPROVED the Caversham Covenant.

81/23 **Aspire Trust Presentation**

The Head presented the Aspire Trust Presentation which was presented by Mark Bagust at the last full Trust meeting. The Head explained that it confirms how much good work is happening in the Trust, which has always been about the life chance of the young people right through the Trust. The Head outlined some of the work carried out over the last year:

- Safeguarding reviews and audits have taken place, starting with those in the Ofsted window, which has included CPD for some of the Designated Safeguarding Leads

who go out with Mark Bagust to gain experience. This has also helped them piece together issues raised in their Ofsted reports.

- Curriculum Development – groups have been created with teachers from Primary, Early Years and Secondary working together on what young people need to succeed. The groups look at some of the most exciting pieces of work carried out in the Trust.
- A really successful ECT programme, which St Georges are now joining as a result of its success. At the meeting, the Trust heard from a couple of trainees who have just finished the programme who said that it was very bespoke. The Trustees also heard from a number of colleagues who were part of the Middle Leader programme.
- Staff Wellbeing survey – this has helped to see where staff wellbeing is across the Trust.
- Network meeting such as the SENCo group have taken place and a Safeguarding Leaders Network group has been created, which is important, as the Trust has lots of shared families.
- The Trust School Business Managers continue to work together. The Head informed Governors that at Cantell they have appointed Sarah Bradshaw, who was the School Business Manager at Bassett Green as their new School Business Manager.

The Head said that the Vice Chair was part of the interview panel and that Sarah made a presentation, had a tour of the school and met with students. The Head commented that it was a very rigorous interview process. There were other candidates who couldn't make it, so Sarah had the day to herself – she presented really well, although it was really difficult as they are used to Keith Pinney. The Head said there are things that Sarah will need to learn, but she will grow into the role and she has a clear understanding of how we work as a school and a community.

The Head informed Governors that Sarah has been in and met with staff and in particular her team. Keith has given a view on Sarah's appointment, which was very positive and complementary, which gives them confidence and they will have a couple of weeks handover.

The Head summarised that the work of the Trust is really powerful and they are operating at a higher level than a lot of the other Trusts in the city and as a Trust they are very supportive to parents and happy to help them. The Head said credit must go to Mark Bagust who is doing a great job as the Trust School Improvement Officer.

A Governor asked whether there were many applicants for the School Business Manager position. The Head explained that there were six applicants, but only three that were available for interview. Unfortunately, one got Covid and the other had already made a commitment to another school. They were very careful about providing the opportunity to interview to the person with Covid, but decided they were happy with Sarah and there were also deadline pressures as the other person wouldn't have been able to interview for two weeks.

The Vice Chair said that they did consider how they could get the other candidates in, but there were time constraints with getting everybody in again and other complications meant that there may have been an October start date. The Vice Chair commented that the appointment is a great opportunity for Sarah and the Trust.

The Head agreed that this is a great opportunity for Sarah who has done her CIP in School Business Management and has HR qualifications. She is also doing another

qualification which she has suspended whilst she starts at Cantell. The Head said that he is excited by her appointment, but sorry that Keith is leaving. **Action**

The Chair asked whether there is a trial period. The Head confirmed that there is a six-month probation period.

82/23 **Safeguarding Visit Report**

The Chair explained that she has met with Michelle and Ian for her last Safeguarding meeting of the year and has met with them six times this year, once every half term.

The Chair said that there isn't anything that she could ask them that they weren't able to answer and all she could do was thank them for the superb job they do.

CPOMs has changed things and work well with the system, which is good because they are dealing with issues all the time in a very professional manner. The Chair said, as a Governing Body, they should have no concerns at all and when Ofsted visited they could see that everything was being done correctly, which is important.

The Chair said that Governors should give a vote of thanks to Michelle Stocker and Ian Creswell and everybody else who has anything to do with safeguarding at Cantell.

The Head said that they receive 11-15 safeguarding forms on a daily basis from staff, which go to Ian, Michelle and himself. The Head commented that he would be worried if less than this were received.

The Head also has a weekly meeting with Ian and Michelle to go over the actions of the week and to sign things off or deal with anything that hasn't been addressed, so it can be dealt with by the weekend, or early the following week – this is a failsafe on a Friday.

A Governor proposed that Governors receive an anonymised case study at one of the first meetings of the new academic year. The Head agreed this would be possible.

Agenda
Item

The Chair informed Governors that the only issue that concerns her about safeguarding, is that the agencies don't talk to each other.

A Governor commented that the Head mentioned the number of safeguarding concerns received and about the Friday meeting – he asked whether this is a lot of work for three people. The Head agreed that it is and if this increased, they would have to look at capacity, but they need to be a check and balance for each other. A meeting is needed on a Friday to close down the business of safeguarding for the week.

The Head explained that there had been an Assistant DSL working with Michelle Stocker, who was more suited to student emotional support and who had now moved to work with Jo Pringle. They have now appointed a new member of staff to work with Michelle Stocker.

83/23 **Report of SIP visit, 7th June 2023**

The Head explained that they did something different for Brian's visit in June as they felt it was a real opportunity to give Senior and Middle Leaders the chance to have a conversation with Brian, as some of the best ideas comes from non-agenda meetings.

The Head said that they all signed up for a thirty-minute slot with Brian and he reported that they all engaged in conversation. They are all at different stages of their careers and Brian reported back that all their conversations were about the school.

Brian enjoyed all of the conversations and provided some notes for the SLT to look at.

The Chair that this all seems very positive and good to hear.

The Vice Chair asked if there were any members of staff who used this to have a rant about anything. The Head said no, it was just about what they are doing. Brian didn't go into detail about the conversations, but would have told him if anything needed dealing with – he said they were all really motivated, which is good to hear.

The Head reported that Brian has agreed to continue as Cantell's SIP although he has retired completely, but will be keeping Cantell and Regents Park.

A Governor commented that it was interesting to see what Brian said about the type of student we need to see after they have finished at Cantell, as it is very important to see what happens to these students after school. The Head agreed that everything they do is aimed at this, but the difficult is what happens when they aren't at school and what happens to their visions and values and the high expectations, they have for themselves. The Head explained that the six weeks holiday is a challenge for many young people and many who come back are not the same and the values that are instilled at home are not the same, meaning that they have to start again, which is heart breaking, because these messages are not reinforced outside – all they need is a little mentoring and a little push.

84/23 Relationship Education and RSE Policy

A Governor asked how often RSE lessons take place. The Head explained that Citizenship lessons happen regularly at KS3 as part of lessons. In KS4 it takes place during Enrichment days, which is usually six over the year – all students receive the statutory requirements.

A Governor asked if any parents have withdrawn their children from this subject. The Head confirmed that this is a low number of students.

A Governor commented that the policy covers the understanding of marriage, should there be more about the commitment of partnership. The Head agreed that there is an absence of different relationships in the policy and perhaps there should be a statement with a centralised vision below this. The Head agreed to speak to Harriet Phillips about reviewing the policy again and to include information on the power balance of relationships and gender toxicity.

Head

A Governor asked whether Cantell parents have access to teaching materials for this subject. The Head responded that this is available on the website and they go out to parents beforehand about what they will be teaching.

The Staff Governor commented that they teach about marriage as part of the curriculum as it is important for students to understand the legal benefits of marriage.

A Governor asked who teaches this subject. The Head explained that it is taught by a team, overseen by Harriet Phillips, led by Tina Mudzamiri. Ian Creswell covers Consent, which is a consistent message to students.

A Governor asked whether there has been a rise in the number of families applying for a place due to the SEN support provided at Cantell. The Head responded that he doesn't think so – Bitterne Park is seen as the school for SEN due to their Autism provision. Cantell has the average number of ECHPs, although there are a significant number coming up in the new Year 6 cohort.

The Chair asked if this is across the board, as there is a lack of funds to deal with these issues. John Draper said yes, they have been warned about Year R and every Head he has spoken to says this is their main concern. **A Governor asked whether the situation was a result of COVID.** John agreed, adding that it is thought that they missed out on the communication and social skills. The number arriving in nappies is also something they haven't seen before.

Governors APPROVED the Admissions Policy.

86/23 Chair Update

The Chair reminded Governors to contact link Faculty Leader for a visit to school and if they haven't done so, to make sure they do. The Chair informed Governors that she is due in school over the next couple of weeks to visit PE and Careers.

87/23 Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2023/24

The Head nominated Glynis Alexander as Chair of Governors for 2023/24, seconded by Peter Hilditch.

Governors AGREED to APPOINT Glynis Alexander as Chair of Governors for 2023/24.

Julian Bryant nominated Peter Hilditch as Vice Chair of Governors for 2023/24, seconded by Matt Bunday.

Governors AGREED to APPPOINT Peter Hilditch as Vice Chair of Governors for 2023/24.

The Head gave a huge thanks to both Glynis and Peter on behalf of Governors and staff, commenting that they have been great and in particular through Ofsted

88/23 Headteacher Final Round Up

The Head reported that it has been a great year and unlike most schools, Cantell doesn't ease up towards the end of term, it picks up.

Transition week is taking place this week – Woodlands is the only other school that also does this. The Head added that a lot of work has to take place to make it possible to run a new timetable for students, but they do it because it is the right thing to do. This year, it has been lovely because most of the Year 6 students have been in a Trust school and they feel part of the family already and confident.

The Head explained that it has been complicated today because of the strike, which is also happening on Friday, but they have made a commitment to carry on as they have seen the difference with Year 9, who didn't have Transition because of COVID and we want to do the best for our young people. Students will be taking part in a graduation ceremony and they will receive a t-shirt

The Sports Awards will also be happening next week and the Summer Concert took place last week – the Head thanked those Governors that attended. The Head commented that only a few years ago they didn't have an orchestra, but they have now created a group of young people who take part.

The Head said that there have been lots of trips and visits going out this year, although the impact on staffing and cover is sometimes difficult and they will look at the balance this year.

The Head reported that T&L is really strong with things such as Attack words, Key words, segmented learning and checking for understanding being seen regularly in classrooms.

Clubs are at the heart of the school, and the Head commented that he is really pleased that they have created a pot of student experiences.

Next steps:

- Active listening and thinking about how to contribute.
- To continue working on Oracy – this is not just about exams.
- To continue to work closely with business and on what key skills young people will need when they leave Cantell.
- Ofsted – will probably take place in the summer of next year, or into the following academic year in September 2024. The Head commented that they aren't standing still and will continue to fight for the young people in their care.
- Staffing – the Head commented that it has been a difficult year and it would be great if Governors could write to staff. The Chair agreed to write to staff.

Chair

The Head summarised that it has been a successful academic year, with happy children and staff. Hopefully everyone will have a good break and come back re-energised for September.

89/23 **Appointment of Committee Chairs**

Governors AGREED to APPOINT the following Committee Chairs for 2023/24:

- Finance Committee – Peter Hilditch.
- Staffing Committee – Matt Bunday.

The Chair thanked Governors who attend the Finance and Staffing Committee meetings.

90/23 **Governor Attendance Records**

Governors NOTED the attendance records for 2022/23. The Chair commented that it is really important that Governors attend meetings. She understands that sometimes things happen and people are unable to attend, but the business that they go through in meetings is really important.

The Chair thanked those Governors who have attended and for asking questions at the meetings.

91/23 **Governor Meeting Dates**

Governors discussed attendance at Governor meetings and it was agreed that the Clerk would investigate a policy for remote attendance.

Governors APPROVED the proposed meeting dates for 2023/24.

**Action
Clerk**

92/23 **Finance and Staffing Committee Minutes for Information**

Governors NOTED the minutes of the Finance and Staffing Committee meetings held on the 12th May 2023.

93/23 **Any Other Business**

PFI

A Governor asked about any progress with the PFI financial issues. The Head responded that a meeting with SCC had taken place, which unfortunately hadn't resulted in any progress and it felt like they had accepted the situation.

Governors discussed due diligence and whether this had taken place.

The Head informed Governors that he had attended a meeting at Redbridge School today with the three PFI schools and some solicitors.

The LA Governor commented that his response from SCC was that they carry out due diligence.

The Head explained that the three PFI schools will work together, with the solicitors, on the PFI issues as it to everybody's benefit to get it working properly.

A Governor explained about the impact that the PFI contract and the affordability gap, which has resulted in the other schools in Southampton as they are top sliced to cover any shortfall. PFI costs were up by 10% last year when everybody's budgets had gone down. The Head responded that there are affordability gaps in most PFI contracts and unfortunately, early on in a contract that there is more money available – something should have been created to fund the gap and this liability should fall with SCC.

94/23 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 20th September 2023, 5.30 p.m.

That concluded the business of the Meeting. The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
4.	82/23	Governors to receive an anonymised safeguarding case study.	Head/Ian Creswell	November WGB meeting
5.	84/23	The Head to speak to Harriet Phillips to review the Relationship Education and RSE Policy.	Head/Harriet Phillips	Next Meeting
7.	88/23	Chair to write a letter of thanks to staff.	Chair	Done
7.	91/23	Clerk to investigate policy re: remote attendance at WGB meetings.	Clerk	Next Meeting

