

Southampton School Improvement Officer Annual Visit Report 2023 – 2024

School	Cantell School	
Headteacher	Harry Kutty	
Chair of Governors	Glynis Alexander	
School Improvement Officer	John Seal	Date of visit: 12 October 2023
Other attendees	N/A	
Last Ofsted inspection judgement / date	Good/February 2023	
Information about the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1264 pupils are currently on roll <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this is 28 more than at this point last year (1236) • 18.51% of pupils have SEND (234) • 2.84% (of NOR) of pupils have an EHCP (included in above figure) (36) • 43.8% of pupils have EAL • 29.27% of pupils are eligible for PP (370) • 37.02% of pupils are currently FSM6 (370 + 98 Yr7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this is 4.2% (of NOR) more pupils than academic year 2021/22 • 192 pupils currently have/have ever had a social worker (15.2%) • 25.7 % of pupils were persistently absent in 2022/23 • 5.8 % pupils had 1 or more exclusion(s) in 2022/23 (72) • 5.9% of pupils arrived in-year in 2022/23 (73) • 5.2% of pupils were in-year leavers in 2022/23 (64) • 9 number were EHE leavers in 2022/23 (included in above in-year leavers) • 37 pupils had reduced timetables in 2022/23 	

Follow up review recommended: No

Area to develop	Timescale and intended impact
Maintain a strong focus on attendance levels	to keep as close to the national average as possible.
Maintain the strong levels of attention to detail in the	Provision for all students of the wealth of opportunities available at the school despite their needs and complexities.

provision of the inclusive, rich and broad curriculum.	
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How evidence was obtained

Meetings were held with:

- The headteacher
- The senior leadership team
- The SENDCo
- Safeguarding leads
- Middle Leaders
- Intervention team
- Pastoral team
- Representatives of the governing body including the chair

The following documentation was reviewed:

- School development plan
- SCR

Summary of key findings

- The school provides a first-class ethos for learning with an extremely wide range of opportunities for academic and vocational learning.
- The headteacher is highly visible around the school. The senior leadership team are cut from the same cloth. Their daily routines ensure there is a calm, productive and friendly atmosphere.
- Students' care and welfare is front and centre of the school's operations with staff forging positive relationships with students to make sure they are in the best position to learn and thrive.
- Those students who are hard to reach and/or vulnerable including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are top of the list for all staff to keep an eye on and make sure the appropriate strategies and agencies are involved and informed.
- The curriculum is broad, relevant and meaningful. The richness of the exceptionally wide range of extracurricular activities supplements the strong learning offer for all students through both key stages.
- Academic results and students' pathways to the best grades possible are approached with a forensic detail. Each student is tracked and supported where necessary. There are multiple programmes for supporting students with exam techniques, understanding the best ways to learn and flexible intervention strategies.
- Student attendance and punctuality are monitored with military precision. Students in different 'bands' of attendance less than 90% are contacted alongside their families. There are some good examples of successes and the school is relentless in its approaches.
- Safeguarding is effective. The training programme for staff and monitoring of those students in need of support and guidance is very strong.

The quality of education

- The curriculum is exceptionally well constructed from year 7 through to when students leave at the end of key stage 4. Leaders have set ambitious expectations by involving parents and students in a thorough consultation to aid making choices for their options. The process is based on what students are successful at, what they enjoy doing and what they want to do next.
- Leaders have ensured there is an EBACC pathway for those students who want to choose this route of learning and qualifications. Students have the option not to choose this route in conjunction with their parents to ensure the choices are well informed and discussed in preparation. Leaders are keen to ensure that there are 'no glass ceilings' for students in their progress towards a 'post Cantell' life and work.
- The quality of planning and provision is extremely strong. Senior and middle leaders have a strong grip on rates of student progress and move swiftly to put in place appropriate support for those students 'at risk' of missing their targeted goals in each year group. Leaders at all levels pride themselves on anticipating any 'dip' as soon as they can. There are many good examples of successful interventions.
- Leaders and staff aim to create 'experts' of the students in each subject. There is a clear set of aims linked to improving literacy skills through regular reading in all subjects.
- Reading is considered an essential element in the school day. Students have been trained to be 'reading buddies' and there are plans to implement 'Thinking Reading' during the latter part of the autumn term.
- Assessment strategies include a strong focus on 'checking understanding' and encouraging students to actively listen, speak and think using the vocabulary of the particular subject they are learning.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision is carried out both informally and formally on a routine basis. There is immediate feedback for teachers using a popular 'post-it notes' approach.
- Staff are provided with a wealth of CPD, training and information which is tailored to their needs. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and are able to lead their subjects and year groups in a highly effective manner.
- Students with SEND are very well supported. The provision is well led by the SENDCo. There is a very high proportion of students with high needs and complexities. To ensure these students are supported well, adjustments to the school day and allocation of certain areas provides flexibility for students suffering with anxiety and/or emotionally based school avoidance.
- Inclusion is a strength of the school with a high priority given to students being involved in as many mainstream lessons and activities as possible.
- Those pupils who are in receipt of pupil premium are also supported and monitored effectively.

Behaviour and attitudes

- Behaviour and attitudes are a strong feature of this school with a highly positive ethos pervading the corridors and rooms.
- Attendance is at the forefront of everything leaders and staff do. Senior leaders including the headteacher discuss and analyse punctuality and attendance for each year group on a daily

basis. Team leaders follow up on any queries or gaps with family contact made where appropriate. At the time of the visit, attendance was very close to the national average.

- In lessons seen, student behaviour was attentive and calm. Teachers' instructions, directions and requests were responded to in a positive fashion.
- Around the school both inside and out, students move in a sensible and safe manner.
- There are almost no permanent exclusions and suspensions are rare

Personal development

- This is a real strength of the school. Leaders and staff set out to ensure that they build positive and productive relationships with students to ensure they are receptive to learning and go on to gain the best grades possible and either go on to higher education, apprenticeships or jobs. This is seen in the strong careers advice, information, guidance and support all students are provided with.
- Leaders have fostered strong and productive links with employers, further and higher education institutions and professional sports clubs. These links are used to good effect in providing opportunities for students to visit and hear visitors talk about careers, training and employment.
- Students are provided with a wealth of information, support and guidance around how to study effectively. For example, during the visit students were seen attending a 'Learning Performance – Strategies for Success' to help them develop strategies for gathering information, condensing it and how to revise without stress.
- The exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities are well attended and cover sports, performing arts, IT, art Oxbridge mentoring and a club for young carers. The aim of the programme is to support students develop their 'Cantel Empower Skills.'

Leadership and management

- The enthusiastic and energetic leadership of the headteacher is infectious. He has set a clear direction for the school and the most recent 'good' Ofsted inspection recognised the high levels of aspiration and achievement in the school.
- The headteacher continues to be ambitious for the school and has established a strong outward facing approach which has only strengthened the school's capacity to continue to grow. The school works with other local schools in a trust, and also reaches out to schools nationally to gather examples of good practice so as not to become complacent.
- Leaders keep a close eye on the curriculum and make sure it remains up to date, relevant and strongly sequenced from year 7 to the end of key stage 4. Subject leaders monitor student progress, attendance and the quality of provision regularly and work closely with support teams within the school and external agencies.
- Senior leaders are equally energetic in wanting the best for all the students. The inclusive nature of the school is tangible.
- Governors know the school well. They are aware of the strengths and what the direction of travel is. They are focussed on the priorities of the curriculum, attendance and personal development.

- The culture of safeguarding is very strong with all leaders and members of staff being trained to the latest guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Regular updates are provided and any concerns are promptly reported to DSLs. The school works exceptionally well with external agencies where appropriate including health, social care and the police.