

Cantell School
Minutes of the Reconvened Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 24th April 2024

Present:

Glynis Alexander (Chair from 5.45 p.m.)
Emma Bradshaw
Julian Bryant
Matt Bunday (arrived 5.40 p.m.)
John Draper
John Groves
Ben Hiatt
Peter Hilditch (Chair until 5.45 p.m.)
Nicola Hunt

In Attendance:

Ian Creswell (Deputy Headteacher)
Claire Herridge (Deputy Headteacher)
Siobhan Dodds (Assistant Headteacher)
Rhys Fehners (Assistant Headteacher)
Michelle Burt (Clerk to Governors)

Apologies:

Harry Kutty (Head)

34/24 Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests

Action

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

35/24 Attendance & Behaviour Update

Ian Creswell presented the Attendance and Behaviour data for the year to date, 3rd September until the Spring half term, explaining that he had provided Ofsted with the same information during the recent inspection.

Attendance

Ian informed Governors that from September 2024, all schools in the country will input their data into a live system.

Ian highlighted the following:

- Attendance is very strong at 1.1% above live national.
- FSM (+2%) and non-FSM (+1.6%) are both significantly above national and are in the 3rd and 2nd Decile respectively. They are not in the 2nd Decile overall due to the higher than national FSM figures at Cantell.
- PA is 5.2% better than national at 20.3%.
- FSM and non-FSM are in the 3rd and 2nd Deciles for PA.

Ian informed Governors that they are looking very closely at SEN, which is below the national average due to a small number of students not attending school, which has a big impact on SEN attendance. If these students are taken out of the figures, SEN attendance would be at 90%. Ian explained that plans are in place for all these students and they have managed to get one into school and are working with the others to support them and raise their attendance.

Ian explained that all attendance data is available on line for the whole country every two weeks and the reason why Cantell's attendance is so strong, is because they work really hard to get students into school. 810 letters so far have been sent home in relation to student attendance and the plan is to get attendance up to 95% for all students – which is the goal for next year.

Signed by Chair:



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Permanent Exclusions

Ian informed Governors that this is the one area where there was an extra meeting with Ofsted. Ian went through the paperwork for five of the PEX from the current year, and the Lead Inspector was satisfied that all five were 'last resort'. Ian said that PEX for a school the size of Cantell should be 2/3 a year, but he could prove to the Inspectors that each PEX was about the safety of other students in the school and that they are doing everything they can to make sure that the number is as low as possible as a PEX will affect the life chances of students.

Action

Ian informed Governors that four of the 5 students were now back in other schools and one has returned to their home country.

A Governor asked about Compass not being able to take long term placements, and what happens to students when they are permanently excluded. Ian outlined the process once a student is permanently excluded, which involves a lot of work for all the schools in the city and which can involve managed moves. Ian said that at Cantell they try and work with other schools on managed moves and when these students arrive at Cantell, they go through L2L initially before coming into mainstream. Cantell has a good record with these students and none of them have been permanently excluded once they are here.

A Governor asked whether this situation will continue for a while if Compass is full. Ian responded that it is a difficult situation because if a student's behaviour is not good at their current school, other schools won't want to take them on a placement. There can also be funding constraints, but we currently have three students with Compass Reach, who attend sessions with them. Ian informed Governors that he will be attending a meeting this week to look at the managed move process, which will then go to the panel with the hope of creating a more reciprocal process with other schools.

External Suspensions

Ian explained that External Suspensions figures remain significantly lower than the national average, but due to the national data being two years behind, this is not totally reflective, however, attendance tracking shows that national secondary absence for suspensions is at 0.3% and Cantell is currently at 0.2%, 0.1% below national and at pre-covid levels.

Ian
Creswell

A Governor asked what is the average duration of an external suspension. Ian responded that he doesn't have this figure, but he will check, although it is usually around three days. Ian suggested that he includes data on the length of external suspensions in his next report.

Internal Suspensions

Ian explained that Internal Suspensions are formalised to allow complete control of the process, which ultimately lead to a meeting with parents after students spend time in the Reflection room. Ian added that figures are back down to pre-covid.

Ian informed Governors that there are no particular themes to why students receive an internal suspension, although the current Year 7 students are more challenging than in previous years. There are more students with EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plan) in this group and they are a little bit more immature than previously, needing more support.

A Governor asked whether the higher level of EHCPs is a blip. Ian responded that this is partly due to Covid, but also because this cohort are the largest year group to have gone through primary. The Governor asked whether Ian could see this being more of

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a problem going forward and is there a reason why the number of EHCPs are growing – this is a concern for costs and staffing.

Action

The Chair commented that she thinks that EHCP numbers will continue to rise and they are currently seeing this at the two Junior schools she is also the Chair. Ian added that they are currently looking at what other areas they can put more support into and the SEN department is also being extended – it is about trying to find what can be done with the facilities we have got.

Bullying

Ian informed Governors that bullying is still very rare at Cantell and Ofsted spoke to lots of students who confirmed that bullying is rare, and that they can talk to someone if there is an issue and that they can even email the Headteacher. Ian added that they try and work with students and parents through Student and Parent Voice.

Ian explained that any bullying issues that have been reported are when an intervention hasn't worked and a Year Leader has then had to pick it up, or it is escalated to a member of SLT – only two have got to this stage. Ian said that they always go back and check with any students involved to see if everything is ok with them. Student wellbeing is always the biggest concern.

Sexual Harassment

Ian explained that Ofsted were clear that students are aware that issues will get dealt with and students were able to say that they learn about this issue as part of the CPSD curriculum. Ian added that if they are informed about any issues, they record it and this information includes the more serious stuff that happens outside of school.

In school the most common issue is usually when boys pull other boys' trousers down for a joke. Staff try and explain that this is not a good thing to do and how it makes other students feel and that it is not tolerated at Cantell – Ian added that out of the 9 physical incidents, 3 are for this reason.

A Governor asked in relation to misogynistic language, it was previously mentioned about having a boys' mentor – is this making a difference? Ian responded that it is early days, and it's all about positive male mentors. A lot of the information out there is just about Andrew Tait being wrong, which can have the opposite effect – it is about giving a more positive outlook and the aim is for staff to have a more positive position. Ian informed Governors that a change can already be seen, as some of the stuff that would have been found funny in the past, isn't funny anymore and CPSD is doing a lot of the education around this, and Ofsted recognised that the CPSD programme is fabulous.

Racial Abuse

Ian explained that students have always been strong in reporting racial abuse, and it is all about education and making sure that students realise not to do this type of behaviour. Ian added that nine of the reported perpetrators were white British, the rest were from ethnic backgrounds, and it is making sure that they know that certain language is not appropriate.

Homophobia

Ian said that this area has been a challenge for some of the community because of their religious views. Jo Pringle, the Wellbeing Lead, does a lot of work with CAMHs who say that Cantell is getting LGBTQ+ support right.

Governors RECEIVED and NOTED the Annual Safeguarding and Staff Well Being Review for 2023-24.

37/24 Curriculum Update and Subject Development Week Overview

Action

Claire and Siobhan explained that the last time they presented to Governors, they spoke about having three teaching & learning priorities: attack words, checking for understanding and reading. They have since spent a considerable amount of time working with Faculty and Subject Leaders on the curriculum, and as part of this they wanted to bring all these areas together, so they weren't in isolation, with an aim of creating experts within the subject areas, including the knowledge and skills students will need to think like and speak like an expert.

In response to a question from a Governor, Siobhan explained attack words and their use.

Siobhan explained Subject Development Weeks, which involves looking intently at a particular subject, the priorities and whether they are working. Siobhan added that they are now in the third year of the process: the first year was very much about coaching and the process was carried out together, the second year was opened up to include KS4 and the current year the focus has been on the impact of the curriculum.

The process has grown, and Subject and Faculty leaders have taken the process on themselves and are thinking about the 'so what' and what the benefits are. One of the big issues they have been looking at is whether students are ready at the end of KS3 to go into KS4.

A Governor asked what the deadline is for the cycles. Siobhan responded that in previous years it has been from February to the summer, but this year they started in November and finished in February/Easter. If anything changes such as a Faculty Leader being absent, the dates are moved – it is all about working together.

The Governor commented that her last visit to school was during the Computer Science Subject Development week, which had been really useful as she was able to join the initial meeting, which the Head attended. It appeared to be a very open process.

Siobhan reported that the feedback is that staff at all levels engage with the process and it allows the team to focus on what is going on in their subjects. Staff like it because they are involved and they enjoy having a voice – they come together for a pizza lunch and talk about the curriculum and next steps.

Claire added that CPD needs also come out of this process, which are planned into the next cycle.

Siobhan explained that this year they have really focussed on summarising the process as below and the Faculty and Subject Leaders also write a report.

- What the students have said
- The next steps
- The impact

The Chair asked whether there is a link between the subject areas. Claire said that there are links – subject areas have said similar things and are now working together in some areas. Siobhan added that it is also subject specific, as some areas don't have any similarities, although there are some areas that cross over.

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Siobhan explained what is happening across the school in terms of QA (Quality Assurance) and how they ensure consistency:

- Post it notes – 729 post it notes have been completed so far this year (348 last term). Claire explained the process which provides staff feedback from observations of their lesson, including impact and points to consider.
- T&L weekly Roundup – including a summary of each week’s post it notes. From a leadership point of view, Siobhan said that she goes through this with Faculty Leaders and if any targeted questions come up, they are used in the CPD bursts.

Action

The Chair informed Governors that this is a very positive process and there is no sense of ‘you are doing this wrong’, it is ‘have you considered this’. Claire commented that some people like to put their post it notes on their wall because they are proud. Siobhan added people are only observed for a short time but like to come back for a follow up conversation – they also track how often a member of staff is seen.

Claire explained that student participation in the process is through Student Voice, to get their views and opinions on their learning – and students get to bring their books and a piece of work they are proud of, so staff can see their progress.

Claire added that Helen Squibb came in to review student participation across the school, including the school’s current practice and to identify next steps. Claire said that Helen spoke highly of the process and only had a couple of tips, such as giving feedback to students. Siobhan added that ‘book looks’ are also very important and they tried it just before Ofsted – being able to have these conversations brought everybody together.

Claire explained that parents are also very important, and they said they wanted a lot more information about the curriculum, so a meeting was held to find out what information they wanted and how they wanted it broken down. As a result, the Curriculum Guides were produced, with the first one going out to parents this week, which include a link which takes you through a knowledge and skills document, which has a lot more detail on particular areas. Homework support is also being sent out during the summer term to give parents an idea of the platforms we use and some tips.

The Chair asked whether they know if any parents are reading the curriculum guides. Siobhan responded that unfortunately they can’t tell because of the platform the guides go out in – they cannot guarantee that parents are reading them, but they can advertise them more.

A Governor asked whether this information is sent to parents via email. Siobhan confirmed that it will be and once they click on the link, parents will be able to access a pdf document.

The Chair commented that with all the work that has gone into the guides, if parents aren’t going to access them, is there another way of doing it. Claire responded that the feedback from parents’ voice was very positive, and Siobhan agreed that this is something they will need to revisit again and again.

A Governor agreed that this is a difficult area –his school had a Maths event for parents, which was brilliant, but the parents that attended were the ones they know and reaching the next tier is a constant challenge.

Claire explained that the next steps are to revisit the knowledge and skills document, Faculty priorities and the next steps post SDW and Ofsted and Embedding Expert Learning in the curriculum.

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The Chair said that she went to a meeting with Arts and Drama who were feeding back, they know their stuff, and felt confident that they were being listened to. Siobhan agreed that it is important that staff have the foundation and confidence to be able to present their feedback and how they feel about it.

Action

38/24 Year 11 Progress Update

Progress 8

Rhys reported that last years Progress 8 finished on +0.08 – this year they are predicting +0.18 at DC2. Rhys commented that this year's Year 11 are weaker on average than last year and will do less well. Rhys added that all of the data for Progress 8 is fed into a system called SISRA, which provides comparable data to focus where they are going to finish – this however comes with a caveat that this information might not be accurate as all schools don't use the system.

English and Maths

Rhys highlighted the following for English and Maths at DC2.

- 7+ English predicted 17%, compared 18% in 2023.
- 7+ Maths predicted 19% compared with 20% in 2023 (which was for lesson students).
- 7+ English & Maths predicted 12%, the same as 2023. Rhys commented that key students were identified for English & Maths, who were given upgrades to improve their performance and a slight improvement has been seen.

- 5+ English predicted 38% compared to 37% in 2023.
- 5+ Maths predicted 50% compared to 59% in 2023.
- 5+ English & Maths predicted 31% compared to 33% in 2023.

For 5+ English, it was realised that interventions were needed and a programme was built in providing Saturday sessions for key students to help support them. Two sessions have been held for an average of 140 students, with 60-70% attendance for these targeted students.

5+ Maths, a key group of students were identified to focus on and they are attending Friday upgrades sessions.

A Governors asked whether it is possible to see which students have moved up into the +7 box. Rhys responded that they don't look at this information because it is cumulative. Key groups of students are followed and supported and the students who are 5+ in English, but only 4+ in Maths are put into subject specific Lesson A groups so they can receive extra Maths's support.

4+ English & Maths has seen an increase and are broadly in line with 2023.

Rhys commented that they have also identified a key group 36 students who they want to support to achieve English Grade 5 – all these students are targeted for weekend sessions and other interventions, including Saturday morning sessions with the Head where they complete an English paper and receive feedback the following week. Every week they are building up their stamina in writing and Faculty Leaders are saying these sessions are making a difference with some students going from 20 to 40 Marks. Rhys added that next year time will be factored in to all double lessons on stamina, as it is important.

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The Chair commented that there are bright students who don't do well, because they haven't got the stamina to carry on writing.

Rhys said that they have also identified reading and writing skills as an issue and have fully focussed intervention on these areas and weekend interventions are being held to support students and hopefully an improvement will be seen.

Science

Rhys explained that due to five strike days last year, there was an impact on students when they completed their first mocks because they hadn't completed their work before the mocks, and as a result, it was pointless reflecting predictions on these outcomes. A key group of 60 students received targeted interventions on a Friday and by the time they got to DC2, the students had finished their work, and it was possible to see the results of this.

7+ Combined Science: 12% at DC2 compared to 14% in 2023.

5+ Combined Science at 44% is in line with 2023 (48%) with some sessions being held over the weekends and holidays for key students – 100 plus attended on these days.

4+ Combined Science stayed the same at 67% and broadly in line with 2023, although some improvement is expected.

The EBACC Language subjects have an average point score of 6.1 compared to 6.5 in 2023 and Humanity subjects have an average point score of 3.32 compared to 2.84 in 2023.

A discussion took place about EBACC and vocational subjects and the school's choice to allow students to take the subjects they want to do, rather than pushing them to take EBACC subjects, even if this brings the EBACC score down.

The Vice Chair commented that the school's choice to make decisions based on the wishes of the individual rather than following the Government matrix has been a regular conversation at Governor meetings and the school has Governor's total support in this decision, even though they will not perform as well because they are taking a different approach.

CTLs

Rhys explained how CTLs work and what students need to achieve to get into each group in terms of effort, behaviour and homework. Rhys said compared to last year, there are more students in the Gold and Green groups, which is really positive and shows that students are applying themselves to their learning and are behaving themselves and doing their homework.

Rhys added the Orange groups downwards are generally students with more needs. There are always students who move up and some that drop, but generally everything else stays the same.

Rhys informed Governors that there has also been a change to the Head's CTL Gold group pizza lunch this year, with 266 students due to attend a 'pizza party' as a reward.

A Governor asked whether CTLs are a Government measure. Rhys responded, no, it is a school thing so they can see how students are doing in their behaviour, progress and homework.

39/24 **Minutes of the previous meetings held on the 21st and 26th February 2024**

Signed by Chair:



Date: 5th June 2024

Governors AGREED the minutes of the meetings held on the 21st and 26th February 2024, which were SIGNED accordingly by the Chair.

40/24 **Matters Arising**

Action

All Matters Arising are either complete or for future/committee meetings.

41/24 **SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standards) Report**

The Chair of the Finance Committee explained that the SFVS is a process where the school demonstrates that they are being well governed, making good decisions financially, which is being checked and that bench marking is taking place – i.e., doing everything they should be doing. The Chair of the Finance Committee informed Governors that he had met with the School Business Manager to work through the questions in the SFVS and as a result, he had signed off the SFVS to be returned to SCC.

The SFVS was going to be presented at the last WGB meeting, but as it was postponed due to Ofsted, the report has already been submitted. It follows the same format as in previous years and is backed up with a large amount of paperwork to prove that the school looks after its finances as best it can. The Chair of the Finance Committee confirmed that he is therefore satisfied that all the checks and balances for the school are ok.

42/24 **Finance and Staffing Minutes**

Governors NOTED the minutes of the Finance and Staffing Committees held on the 7th February 2024.

43/24 **Welcome to new Staff Governor**

The Chair welcomed Ben Hiett, the new Staff Governor to his first meeting. Ben introduced himself, explaining that he currently has a son in Year 8 and another due to join Cantell in September in Year 7. Ben said that he is looking forward to the opportunity to get more involved and give a bit back.

All the Governors present introduced themselves and what their link subjects are.

Ben asked whether as a Parent Governor, he would be allocated a link subject. It was AGREED that the Clerk would identify any vacancies for link roles and confirm with Ben.

Clerk

44/24 **Ofsted Update**

The Chair explained that as the Head is out of school today, he has provided a video for Governors to watch in relation to the recent Ofsted Inspection on the 26th and 27th March.

Governors watched the pre-recorded video message from the Headteacher about the recent inspection, the outcome of which is currently confidential.

45/24 **Any Other Business**

Community Football Match

Signed by Chair:



Date: 5th June 2024

Matt Bunday said that he wanted to let Governors know about a half term activity taking place during May half term on Cantell's Astro, which is being organised by Adam O'Neale the local PSCO. The aim of the match is to build community relationships. The match will take place on the 29th May and Matt said that he will be helping out, and maybe getting a team together. Governors are invited to come along. **Action**

46/24 **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 5th June 2024, 5.30 p.m.

That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
2.	35/24	Ian Creswell to include the duration of external suspensions to his report in future.	I. Creswell	Next time report presented
8.	43/24	The Clerk to inform Ben Hiatt of his Link Subject area	Clerk	As soon as possible

Ongoing Matters Arising

2	04/24	Head to look for a replacement for Finance/Staffing Committee	Head	Asap
6.	08/24	Governors to arrange visits with the Link Faculties	All	When available

Signed by Chair:



Date: 5th June 2024