

Cantell School
Minutes of the Reconvened Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 5th June 2024

Present:

Glynis Alexander (Chair)
Emma Bradshaw
Julian Bryant
Matt Bunday
John Draper
John Groves
Ben Hiatt
Peter Hilditch
Nicola Hunt

In Attendance:

Steve Godwin (Assistant Headteacher)
Michelle Burt (Clerk to Governors)

Apologies:

Harry Kutty (Head)

47/24 Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests

Action

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

48/24 CEIAG (Careers, Information and Guidance) Update Post Ofsted

Steve Godwin informed Governors that he works closely with Andy Paterson, the Faculty Lead for Careers and Education Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). Last year they presented a day-to-day view to Governors, along with the aims for students.

Steve added that in Brian Lightman's recent SIP report he confirmed that the school meets the requirements of the new Provider Access Legislation and Ofsted's report said that Cantell provides a well-thought-through and varied careers education. Steve commented that the figures for young people who stay in education, training and employment, show that Cantell is a very good school.

Governors NOTED the DfE figures for NEETS (not in Education, Employment or Training) from 2021 were 14% for Cantell, compared to the National Average of 6% and 14% for SCC. Steve explained that there is always a lag with DfE data, which is reliant on them chasing the data, which they do until around March.

Steve explained that the other difficulty is that the 2021 data is from during COVID, meaning the DfE didn't do a checking exercise, and according to Cantell data, there were 91% of students in education, employment or training, not 86% as reported by the DfE, although this is still quite low with 9% NEETS, about 20 students.

Out of these 20 students, 3% went back to their home countries, which would have been classed as NEET by the DfE. 15 students, 6% are NEET and have fallen through the gap for a variety of reasons. Steve explained that they track students for around two years after they leave Cantell and although some drop out of college by Christmas, the school keeps in touch with them and try to find more appropriate places at a different college. Unfortunately, these tend to be some of the most disadvantaged or challenging students, who struggle when they leave, because they are so well looked after at Cantell.

Signed by Chair:



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This year group were in lockdown and then in bubbles when they returned to school and didn't have the usual help in Year 10, such as college taster days and visits to colleges. Other provision they didn't receive were initiatives such as the NatWest Careers week, which was held online, work experience, mock interview days, the careers fair and college application days, where they are helped to fill in their applications for college. These students were massively impacted by COVID going into Year 11.

Steve explained that they are doing as much as possible to identify potential NEETs and have started tracking students from Year 7 so they can identify which students might fall into this category. At the start of Year 7 they identify around 50 students, although students do move in and out of this group, and 15 Year 10 students have been identified who are the most difficult to reach and these students will be prioritised for college taster days and will probably get three compared to the normal two visits.

A Governor asked if there is a reason why the current Year 10 is a tricky group. Steve responded that it just goes in cycles and is one of those things. Year 10 attendance is better, up to 91% yesterday, but again it is a legacy from COVID, when they would have been in Year 6.

Another Governor agreed that attendance is the same in the primary sector. Steve added that Year 10 is a difficult group, but they are throwing everything at them.

The Chair commented that more parents seem to be taking their children out of school to home educate them and there are more mental health issues, starting at a younger age and you can imagine the turbulence during puberty.

A Governor asked whether the figures would be different if these students were home educated. Steve responded that this would result in them coming off-roll – the best place for them is in school.

Steve informed Governors that they are now back on track, with NEETs the priority, but they have to be pragmatic that this year group is difficult.

A Governor asked whether the disparity between the school and DfE figures is something to be concerned about. Steve responded that the messages they have received is that there is a new understanding about the reality of the DfE figures.

A Governor asked whether the DfE revisit their figures. Steve responded no, once their data is published, that's it. Brian Lightman gave some reassurance that there is a recognition that the DfE tracking numbers are poor and Ofsted acknowledged that it is difficult for schools to track students.

A Governor commented that there seems to be an awful amount of work involved and asked if there is any feedback from Brian Lightman or Ofsted as to whether Cantell is going above and beyond, compared to other schools. Steve responded that Brian said that he is aware that Cantell has one of the best provisions that he has seen in any of the schools he works with, but they are not resting on their laurels and always try and make things better for the individuals who don't engage in school.

A Parent Governor commented that the Edulink App is really useful, allowing him to track day to day attendance. Steve replied that he will pass this information on

Steve informed Governors that no other schools provide a NatWest Careers week or invites colleges in to meet with Year 11 students. Other initiatives that only Cantell

provides are College Application days and the Careers Fair and you could clearly see the numbers drop when it wasn't possible to hold these events.

Action

A Governor commented that the Options Evening is also a really good event. Steve agreed, explaining that this is held in the main hall and the main colleges, the university and some big employers attend – this is also not replicated at other schools.

A Governor asked whether the risk group is targeted prior to Year 10. Steve responded that they work with this group of students from Year 7 and the Primary schools provide information about which students they need to target. NEET students also receive careers meetings every year to try to engage them back into education.

A Governor asked Steve to pass on their thanks to Andy Paterson for his hard work.

The Chair commented that Andy has come on leaps and bounds since Steve has been working with him, and she can do nothing but praise him as it is very important to acknowledge when people rise to the level that we would need them to be. Support for all of the students is so important.

Steve commented that they are tracking attendance constantly and always do their best to make sure students move up as far as they can. The Heads of Year also support a lot of these students and their parents and we are lucky as a school, that the Heads of Year don't teach and are able to be there all the time for students, which we should thank them for.

49/24 **Minutes of the Meeting held on the 24th April 2024**

Governors AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th April 2024, which were SIGNED accordingly by the Chair.

50/24 **Matters Arising**

35/24 Governors NOTED that Ben Hiatt has arranged his Link visit to the Humanities Department for the end of June.

51/24 **Governor Link Visit Feedback**

The Chair reminded Governors to make sure they make appointments to visit their link areas.

All

John Draper reported that he had visited the English department with a colleague from Swaythling school and as part of their visit, they had looked at the library. It was remarkable to see the engagement and concentration the students had and it was wonderful seeing them reading a wide range of challenging texts. They then went into English and found out about some of the students who left Swaythling a few years ago and it was good to see the progression that had gone on.

John explained that there will be a follow up visit, with Swaythling hosting Cantell staff who will be looking at some of the Shakespeare texts Swaythling pupils are studying. This is a reciprocal arrangement, which is proving to be very useful, with everybody learning things.

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a) **Summary of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 22nd May 2024**

The Chair of the Finance Committee outlined some of the items discussed at the meeting which included:

- Review of the accounts from the end of March 2024. The Committee quizzed the School Business Manager about the electrical costs, which were much higher than expected and also the rise in FSM costs, and whether this was due to more students having meals. The School Business Manager is going back to have a look at these areas and will be updating the Committee.

The Chair asked whether the additional electricity costs are also due to the increased uptake of FSM. The Finance Committee Chair responded, probably not, but the School Business Manager will be providing more information.

- There was a discussion about the lack of information received from SCC and the LA Governor is helping in the background. The School Business Manager will be feeding back on why prices have gone up, although costs have come down recently.
- The surplus carried-forward balance is £699,047, which is a healthy balance.
- They also looked at the budget for the coming year and the anticipated income and expenditure.
- The main point was about the reserves and the plans to use some of it to make some changes to areas of the school, such as creating more meeting rooms in the CTC, changing archives and toilets into offices and alterations to main reception. All the proposed changes are for the good of the school and a budget will be put aside.

A Governor asked about a previous comment that there would be a deficit. The Chair of the Committee responded that this is always a concern and there is a prediction that school numbers will come down although this won't affect Cantell for the next three years. There will always be a predicted deficit in the three-year budget, but the key is student numbers and how much money the school receives.

The Staff Governor commented that there is always a concern from a staff point of view, whether pay rises will be funded by the Government. The Chair of the Committee responded that there is always a great deal of caution built into the budget for this type of unfunded pay rise.

A member of the Finance Committee commented that what he took away from the meeting is that we don't want to go the other way and have too much money, so there is a need to spend some of it. The Chair of the Committee agreed that they don't want to have a carry forward which increases year on year as schools can't carry too much surplus, so the idea is, because there is a healthy surplus, to use some of it to make improvements to the school environment for students, visitors and staff.

The Chair of Governors said that there are also some extra SEND students who will coming up to Cantell in Year 7. The Committee Chair explained that there is some extra funding coming from SCC for this, as Cantell has been recognised for it's work with SEN and extra funding is being received to develop the area.

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A Governor asked whether the carry-forward is more or less than the previous year. The Committee Chair said that it has gone up with student numbers, but they are now at a point where numbers are not going to go up significantly. There has also been extra funding from grants for Covid recovery, tutoring and Ukrainian students. **Action**

b) **Charging and Remissions Policy for Approval**

The Charging and Remissions Policy had been recommended for approval by the Finance Committee, but Governors were unclear about a section of page 2 of the policy and asked for the School Business Manager to confirm what it means.

The Clerk agreed to clarify with the School Business Manager and email the amended policy out to Governors for approval **Clerk**

53/24 **Staffing Committee**

a) **Summary of the Staffing Committee Meeting held on the 22nd May 2024**

The Chair of the Staffing Committee summarised the recent meeting:

- Recruitment – there are no imminent concerns around recruitment and it is clear that Cantell is a sought-after school, where people tend to stay. When staff do leave, it is always for a good reason, but never because they don't like Cantell, which is really powerful. There are currently a few vacancies, which is usual for the time of year. There is more of a talent pipeline over the next few years, which is not unusual, and Cantell is extremely keen to recruit and train new staff, which is something the Committee will monitor over the next few months.
- Exit Interviews - recently only 50/60% of staff received exit interviews, as people have sometimes already moved away. The last information received by the Committee showed 90% of leavers had met with the Head, and the results prove that people aren't leaving without a good reason.
- Complaints - it appears that there are more vexatious complaints happening, but in most cases, staff are doing everything and more, that they can.

A Governor said that he had recently attended training and had been provided with a model complaints policy, which deals with vexatious complaints and the recording of conversations and social media comments, which covers some of the issues that schools are experiencing.

Governors NOTED that Brian Lightman has been reviewing the school complaints policy, and when the suggested amendments had been reviewed by the School Business Manager, the policy would come back to Governors for review and approval. **Clerk**

- Health & Safety – the Committee received a formal report, with all issues being checked to ensure they never happen again. The School Business Manager mentioned that she is looking at securing some external advice on GDPR, as this is a big part of her role.

The Chair of Governors commented that vexatious complaints are a big issue in all her schools at the moment and it says a lot about what is currently happening in the country, where sometimes schools are the only stable places for students and parents. It is difficult for families, but as schools will

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often offer help, families keep coming back to us. Unfortunately, schools cannot always provide the help they want. **Action**

A Governor asked whether the school receives many Freedom of Information requests. John Draper, the Head at Swaythling said they get some at his school and they find that parents who put in a complaint, will follow this up with an access request.

The Chair commented that schools are lucky that they have staff who don't teach and are able to follow these requests up, although it must be very difficult in a smaller school.

b) **GDPR Data Protection Policy for Approval**

Governors APPROVED the GDPR Data Protection Policy.

c) **Freedom of Information Policy for Approval**

Governors APPROVED the Freedom of Information Policy.

54/24 **Chair Update**

The Chair said that the Head was hoping to provide Governors with his post Ofsted reflections, and would do so at a later date.

The Chair said that she continues to keep an eye on school emails and follow what's going on in school. She always congratulates staff when they do something fantastic. The Chair added that she also always emails new staff to welcome them.

55/24 **Any Other Business**

a) **Community Football Match**

Matt Bunday explained that he sent an email to Governors about the Community Football match and apologised for the short notice. Cantell was very generous and gave them the pitch and within 48 hours, they had around 60 people who said they would attend, including the police and the Saints Foundation. Matt thanked the school and Governors for their support, adding that there is an appetite to do it again as the concept is really powerful and the event had a community feel. Matt promised to keep everyone informed about the next event and said maybe they can have a Cantell team.

b) **Love Where you Live Campaign**

Matt commented that he had picked up from the Southampton Community team about Cantell potentially being the venue for the 'Love Where you Live' campaign, which he would be contacting the Head about as there is a question mark over whether it is the right venue – but he promised to keep Governors up to date on what is happening.

c) **Items for Future Meetings**

Nicola Hunt asked whether it would be possible to invite the member of staff responsible for Boys Mentoring, Enrichment and Personal Development. The Clerk agreed to invite them to present at meetings in the new academic year.

**Agenda
– future
mtgs**

Signed by Chair:



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Wednesday 17th July 2024, 5.30 p.m. in the CTC.

That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
5.	52/24	Clerk to clarify section of the Charging & Remissions Policy with the SBM and email out to Governors for review/approval.	Clerk	As soon as possible
5.	53/24	Clerk to forward Complaint's policy to Governors for review/approval once changes have been agreed with SBM.	Clerk	As soon as possible
6.	55/24 c)	Members of staff for Boys Mentoring, Enrichment and Personal Development to be invited to present to Governors in the new academic year.	Clerk	Next Academic year

Ongoing Matters Arising

	04/24	Head to look for a replacement for Finance/Staffing Committee	Head	Asap
3.	51/24	Governors to arrange visits with the Link Faculties	All	When available

Signed by Chair:



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