Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Thursday 7th November 2024

Present:	**In Attendance:**
Peter Hilditch (Chair)	Ian Creswell (Deputy Headteacher)
Emma Bradshaw	Rhys Fehners (Assistant Headteacher)
Julian Bryant	Rachel Bridges (SENCo)
Matt Bunday	Matty Taylor (Thrive Lead)
John Groves	
Ben Hiett	**Apologies:**
Nicola Hunt	Glynis Alexander
	John Draper
	Harry Kutty

15/25 **Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests** **Action**

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

16/25 **Thrive Hub**

Rachel Bridges the school SENCo, introduced herself and Matty Taylor, the Thrive Hub Lead, to Governors and explained that they would provide some background in relation to the Thrive Hub and then take Governors on a tour of the area.

Rachel explained that a year ago, the SEND Lead at the LA (Local Authority), approached the Head about the SEND needs in the city, which are very complex as there are more students needing places in special provision than are available and because Great Oaks is oversubscribed, there is a need to resource extra provision.

The Head agreed with the LA and agreed to take some students at Cantell and as a result, the team has worked with Great Oaks to set up the extra provision for students who all have similar needs, who wouldn't cope in mainstream and who are on the borderline for Great Oaks.

Rachel explained , the students have a diagnosed condition or moderate learning difficulty, so the provision provided at Cantell, which is in one location, is beneficial, particularly to one student who has a visual impairment. All the students come from primary school across the city and have quite a big gap in their learning, particularly for Maths, which has taken some getting used to.

Matty informed Governors that the biggest challenge has been the range of abilities, with some students having to start phonics again, whereas others have mastered phonics – having all the students in one classroom is quite a challenge in relation to getting the teaching right to cater for both ends.

What do parents, carers and students say about Thrive? Matty explained that he had sent a feedback sheet home and the results showed that students really love being at Cantell and the parents are also very happy with the provision. Matty added that he has found the experience the most rewarding thing he has done - the students brighten his day with their willingness to learn, which is refreshing.

Signed by Chair: Date: 12.12.24

Matty explained he had visited the students at their Primary schools and had been shown some of the work they had been doing, and the team have been working with Great Oaks on the curriculum. Rachel had also approached Cantell's Faculty Leaders to see what they wanted the provision to look like and lots of teachers volunteered to teach, as they were all keen to get involved. **Action**

Matty explained that along with the subjects on the curriculum, they had also added in extras such as phonics and life skills lessons, to teach students things like how to tell the time. They also have speech and language lessons and tare looking at buying in a basic programme for this. The students have made massive progress in the first eight weeks and have all had an amazing start. Matty added that they have gone with a primary school approach and will be trying to prepare some of the students to maybe access some mainstream lessons.

Governors left the meeting briefly for a tour of the Thrive Hub.

Matty explained that transition is always a highlight for students coming to Cantell in Year 7 so they invited the Thrive students in for an afternoon for a tour of the school, when there were no other students around, so they could also meet their teachers and take part in some activities that the other transition students were doing.

Rachel informed Governors that there will be another cohort next year, with a meeting taking place in a week's time to talk about arrangements. Students still need to apply for a special school place through Great Oaks, who will then decide which students will go there and which will come to Cantell – this will be ten students.

The hope is that there will be a group of ten students each year going forward and the Head has been in touch with the LA to discuss additional building work. The hope is that there will be a provision at Cantell for at least the next two years.

The Chair asked, from a teaching angle, you mentioned the primary focus and that you have one teacher with primary experience. What about the rest of the team, do they need training in primary teaching? Matty said that he personally hasn't had any primary training, but they work in a very similar way and meet weekly. Rachel added that one of the teachers is primary trained and Rachel herself trained in KS2 and KS3, although she hasn't taught it for some time. They have done a lot of work with Great Oaks, and may be able to work with their team some more.

Ian Creswell informed Governors that this time around they have tapped into the skills of existing staff, the training will come later, but Governors shouldn't underestimate the skills they have. Matty added that they have also reached out to the Trust schools to see if they can go and visit some English lessons.

The Staff Governor commented that teaching staff also attend tTrust Curriculum meetings and through these groups, are able to access resources. Matty agreed adding they have shared a lot of their experience of the primary curriculum, but the Thrive team wanted to put their own twist to it.

A Governor asked about outcomes – she understands it is difficult, but is there a vision? Rachel responded that they are hoping that some students may be able to achieve entry level English and maybe Maths and Science – Cantell can also offer an Art Award and some may be able to achieve some level of Humanities. There are students however in mainstream who are at similar levels, who can manage a GCSE Art, so some of these students may be able to access a GCSE.

Signed by Chair: Date: 12.12.24

The Chair thanked Rachel and Matty on behalf of Governors for the information provided, adding that it was good to see the Thrive Hub in person, and as the Link for SEND, he will be arranging his visit. **Action**

17/25 **Suspension & Attendance Update**

Ian Creswell presented the Behaviour and Wellbeing Analysis for the previous year and the first half term for 2024/25.

Attendance

- Attendance is currently at 94.5% compared to 93.4% at the same period in the previous year, which is back to pre-Covid levels.
- FSM at 91.5% is also back to pre-Covid levels.
- SEN student attendance is at 90%, which is really positive for the first half term and the highest for five years. Ian commented that Covid panicked SEN students, whose mental and emotional health is low. EHCP students are included in these figures (including the 11 Thrive students), but is the only time they are included in the data.
- PA (Persistent Absence) at 90% is not quite back to pre-Covid levels.

Ian informed Governors that all attendance figures are above those for the same period in 2023/24 at 94.5%, compared to 93.4% the previous year. National figures are currently 93% compared to 92% the previous year, putting Cantell in the top 10% of schools.

Ian added they will continue to look at FSM and SEN attendance, which is currently at 91.5% and 90.1%, with targeted support for these areas.

Ian informed Governors that this is all down to shear hard work, but it is a positive picture.

Permanent Exclusions

Ian reported that Permanent Exclusions are at 0 so far for the current year compared to 2 at the same point the previous year.

Ian said a huge thank you to Julian Bryant who sat on a pre-permanent exclusion panel with the Head in their Governor capacity, for a student who is really struggling. The parent had he opportunity to outline her concerns and they discussed options to help the student in question, which unfortunately hasn't had a great deal of affect.

Ian informed Governors that permanent exclusions are always the last resort and he'd very much like to keep the number at 0.

The Chair asked about the pre-meeting, as presumably this would have a narrow scope as to whether it is suitable or not, as there have been permanent exclusions for a one-off incident – how would you deal with this? Ian responded that they would only use a pre-permanent meeting for a persistent behaviour issue as it is a chance for parents and Governors to identify if anything has been missed. This wouldn't happen for a one-off incident, because these would go straight to a permanent exclusion, but it is something they might look at for students who are heading that way.

Ian explained that some long-term placements, such as Compass aren't currently available, due to the number of permanent exclusions in Southampton, meaning that Compass is always full.

Signed by Chair: Date: 12.12.24

A Governor commented that the pre-permanent panel is a really good idea, as it gives some students another change. In terms of Compass, do you have an idea of why this is happening? Ian responded that there has been 38% increase in suspensions, due to a change in behaviour since Covid, which is a national trend. Most of the permanent exclusions at Cantell come from the L2L provision, where students get extra support for conditions such as ADHD, even though they haven't been diagnosed. **The Governor agreed that it has always been made clear at permanent exclusion panels, that the school is doing everything it can for students.** **Action**

The Same Governor commented that every time this conversation takes place, they are told that Compass is full – is this likely to be a long-term situation and does someone need to ask why? Ian responded that previously Compass always had places, but as schools can now apply for funding for provisions such as L2L, the LA cannot fund both.

External Suspensions

The total number of external suspensions for the year 2023/24 peaked at 161, compared to 149 in 2022/23 and 92 in 2021/22.

So far this year there have been 30 external suspensions, compared to 49 at the same point last year.

Internal Suspensions

Internal suspensions have also seen a decline at 64 so far this year, compared to 79 at the same point the previous year.

In response to a question from a Governor, Ian confirmed that the code OW is for weapons or another unauthorised object - at Cantell this is mainly for vapes, which is a national issue.

A Governor asked why suspension figures are going down. Ian responded that he thinks it's due to students most affected by Covid having left. They are keeping an eye on Year 8, as this group has most SEN students and Year 7 is a more stable cohort than in previous years.

Bullying

Bullying is very rare at Cantell, but they continue to look at negative behaviour and it is made clear to students that they need to report bullying so it can be resolved.

A Governor asked what 'repeated' means – is it because the bullying stopped and then started again? Ian confirmed this is correct. Bullying incidents are reported to the Year Leader first and then escalated to himself. A lot of students will however go straight to the Head, who deals with it.

Students are reminded that they won't always get on with everybody. A clear report is kep of all incidents and Ofsted has confirmed that bullying incidents are very rare at Cantell.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is treated very carefully, due to some issues which take place out of school – more details are available in the Safeguarding policy. Ian added that at least 50% of the physical incidents are boys being silly in PE, pulling each other's trousers down.

Signed by Chair: Date: 12.12.24

Racism **Action**

Unfortunately, we live in a city where some people still use this type of language, but Cantell is a place where there is full integration between all ethnicities. The vast majority of incidents were verbal with the use of language that students need to be educated about.

The Chair commented that a lot of the information provided for incidents are classed as minor – how do they get into the statistics? Ian responded that students come and tell staff about incidents. The most reported are racism at 99%, the main one, second is sexual harassment at 95%, homophobia also in the 90s. It's all about education and telling students this is language we don't use - it is mainly victims and witnesses who report incidents.

Lots of topics are covered in assembly on a regular basis to get the message out and students also complete wellbeing surveys, which provides information on any students who have an issue.

18/25 **GCS Outcomes 2024**

Rhys provided an update of the GCSE results presented at the last meeting in September, which he explained now includes national figures, which are currently unratified. Rhys added he is also aware of an issue with some data for BTEC qualifications that doesn't look right.

The English and Maths Headlines are:
7+ English and Maths - 9.2% (12.5% national)
5+ English and Maths - 45.8% (45;7% national)
4+ English and Maths - 66.3% (65.7% national)

7+ English and Maths is a priority and Rhys meets with the Faculty Leaders and Subject Teachers once a fortnight. 5+ reached national for the first time, which is really good and 4+ at slightly above national is also really good.

Average Attainment 8 is up on last year at 4.55 compared to 4.50. Progress is being made every year in English and Rhys meets with staff weekly to look at support for key groups and students.

Rhys talked through the results for the rest of the subjects, explaining which are up on the previous year apart from Languages which is down. The caveat for Language is that although the numbers taking languages are going up year on year, the overall figure is down as students who took Latin didn't do well, which brought down the average point score.

Governors NOTED that Progress 8 at +0.20 places Cantell as above average, compared to average the previous year. Governors also NOTED the results overview for 2024 compared to the previous two years.

The Chair asked what was the issue with Latin Paper 2? Rhys responded that unfortunately the students didn't understand the paper and they all failed. Kat Chivers, the Faculty Leader for Languages will be looking at how to support the Latin teacher to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Rhys added that the priority now is attendance – if students' attendance is at 93%+ they will be at ½ grade better than students in other schools. As part of this key students will be monitr4ed, along with girls in year 11, who are still being mentored. It is important to get students in classrooms so they do well and to embed the love of learning.

Signed by Chair: Date: 12.12.24

The Chair commented that in the past there have been priority groups with a particular focus, such as FSM or girls – is this still happening? Rhys responded that there is still a girl's mentoring group to support attendance. If students are in school and their attendance is good, they will achieve. Meetings are held regularly to go through all subject and to identify key students who need help. **Action**

19/25 **Governor Link Visits**

The Chair thanked Governors on behalf of the Chair of Governors for coming into school to do their link visits.

History – Ben Hiett
Ben reported that his visit to History went well - he decided to double down and look at one subject in more detail, and will do a similar thing for RE and Geography.

Ben said he also took part in a student voice meeting and would like to see KS4 when he comes back in.

The Chair commented that it will be good to see the differences in the classrooms. Ben agreed, adding that History needs a bit more of a focus.

English – Nicola Hunt
Nicola reported that she met with the English Faculty Leaders and quite a few of the trainee teachers, as well as some more senior teachers. The Faculty Leaders were looking at some of the remaining papers and were doing catch ups for students who weren't in school the previous week, Nicola also had a chance to talk to some students.

It was useful to look at changes to texts and speak to students about applying for college and using their oracy skills. Nicola also went to the Reading Hub and met Becky Toland and they spoke about some of her sessions and reading tests – they also visited the Thrive Hub, which was really good.

It was also good to look at the collaboration that English are doing, such as the Southampton Reading Charter, the Festival of Reading and the work they are doing with St Annes and other local schools. Reading Buddies started again in the Autumn term, and some students in the higher years, will be reading with the younger students.

The Chair commented that it looks like the love of reading is really being driven.

John Groves – Science
John only came into school on Tuesday and will send his visit report over as soon as it's signed off. John spent some time with the Science Technicians this time, instead of teachers and it was really informative. They discussed their laboratory systems and processes such as LabLogger where they can look at future lessons to see what equipment is needed. John added that he also found out a lot about the Lifelab trips, which take place at the hospital and covers health and health awareness.

Emma Bradshaw – Computer Science & Maths
Emma reported that her visit was split into two parts, a meeting with Joe Tait the FL for Computer Science, followed by a Learning Walk with Catherine Merrell-Jones, the FL for Maths. The Computing Science team had been awarded a TES School Award for Best Use of Technology, specifically for Assisted Technology, to support students in areas such translation and dyslexia. which is a bit of a coup for the school. Emma added that both FL are part of the Network meetings and Maths are looking at how to support KS3 interventions using resources for dyscalculia as well as numeracy.

Signed by Chair: Date: 12.12.24

20/25 **Policies for Approval** **Action**

As Governors had identified issues with all of the policies presented, it was agreed that the Clerk would make the amendments requested and upload the policies to GovernorHub for review and approval. **Clerk**

21/25 **Head Update**

The Head sent a message for Governors to say that he is very proud of the number of applications received for next year's Year 7 intake, which is a record number, and whilst not a benchmark, he is able to say that Cantell is the most popular school in the local area, as well as the most popular school in the city – it was only a few years ago that they were getting more 2nd choices than 1st.

22/25 **Finance & Staffing Committee Minutes – 10th July 2024**

Governors NOTED the minutes from the Finance & Staffing Committee meetings that were held on the 10th July 2024.

23/25 **Any Other Business**

There was no Other Business.

24/25 **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 12th December 2024, 5.30 p.m. in the CTC

That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 7.19 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
6.	20/25	Clerk to make changes to policies as requested by Governors and upload policies to GovernorHub for review and approval.	Clerk	As soon as possible

Ongoing Matters Arising

	04/24	Head to look for a replacement for Finance/Staffing Committee	Head	Asap
	51/24	Governors to arrange visits with the Link Faculties	All	When available
	55/24	Members of staff for Boys Mentoring, Enrichment and Personal Development to be invited to present to Governors in the new academic year.	Clerk	Future meeting

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