Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Thursday 18th September 2025

Present:
Glynis Alexander (Chair)
Harry Kutty (Head)
Emma Bradshaw
Julian Bryant
John Draper
John Groves
Ben Hiett
Peter Hilditch *(left at 7.00 p.m.)*
Nicola Hunt
Bhupinder Siran

In Attendance:
Ian Creswell (Deputy Headteacher)
Jo Taft (Deputy Safeguarding Lead)
Rhys Fehners (Assistant Headteacher)
Michelle Burt (Clerk to Governors)

Apologies:
Matt Bunday

01/26 **Safeguarding Training** **Action**

Governors completed their Annual Safeguarding training prior to the start of the meeting and were asked to sign the declaration that would be emailed to them the following day and return it to HR as instructed.

02/26 **Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests**

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

03/26 **Safeguarding Policy**

Governors APPROVED the Safeguarding Policy

04/26 **Matters Arising**

64/25 External Suspension Comparison

Governors NOTED the information handed out by Ian Creswell on External Suspensions, which was broken down into whole school, SEN and FSM (Free School Meals) and compared Cantell's data for 2024/25 to the National figures for 2023/24.

Ian explained that the total suspensions for 2024/25 for all students was 202: 123 SEN and 147 FSM – these figures were for 98 students, whole school and 48 SEN and 67 SEN.

Ian reported that the suspension rate at Cantell overall is significantly better than the national figure and although 2024/25 was slightly higher than the previous year, suspension for all students was only 7.6% of the whole school population.

The average days suspension at Cantell is 3, compared to 1.9 nationally, but suspensions are used as a last resort, for serious issues, so they tend to be for a longer period of time. One day exclusions are occasionally used for students who refuse to co-operate, and they then have to do their sanction the next day.

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A Governor commented that the data provided is very useful to see the figures broken down, which makes you think about Cantell's higher attendance, but also much higher levels of FSM etc – this shows that all of these group's attendance needs to be above average, to be able to break even. **Action**

Ian responded that he is really proud of the FSM and SEN rates, as staff have put a lot of work into this and it shows that Permanent Exclusions are the last resort.

64/25 Permanent Exclusion Data

Ian distributed a second table which outlined the number of Permanent Exclusions over the last three years, broken down into gender, Pupil Premium, SEN, FSM, Look After Children and ethnicity. The information also included the reason for the Permanent Exclusion and the current educational provision of the students excluded. Ian commented that at Cantell they have lower than average external exclusions, but higher permanent exclusions.

Ian informed Governors that the percentage for the four permanent exclusions in 2024/25 is 0.39% compared to the National Average of 0.25%.

Ian explained if one student was removed from the figures for 2024/25, this would take the percentage to significantly below average. Ian has also spoken to Compass, who had a couple of things to feedback about the five students who were permanently excluded last year:

- One student left the country and didn't attend Compass, but is now back in the country and attending another secondary school.
- Another student who should have been attending Compass, refused the offer of a new secondary school, but also didn't attend Compass.
- The other three students all went to other secondary schools, but were all permanently excluded for the same reasons they were excluded from Cantell for.

This proves that for all these five students, they weren't excluded from Cantell too soon and Ian added that Compass talked about successful reintegration and that it isn't about students staying with them, the purpose is to reintegrate them back into a secondary school – 75% of students who go back to a secondary school are successful, but not the ones from Cantell, they have gone back again.

Governors NOTED that 75% of students permanently excluded from Cantell come from L2L, which means they are in the right place as they need the most support, which they have in L2L, but if a permanent exclusion is needed, we know we have got it right.

Ian pointed out that the permanently exclusion rate for SEN students at Cantell is 0.81% compared to 0.8% nationally. The rate for students with an EHCP at Cantell is 0.00% compared to 0.52% nationally – alternatives are always sought for students with an EHCP at Cantell, and if this can't be in school, they look to find an alternative for them. Ian added that the permanent exclusion rate for non-SEN is 0.16%, the same as national and 0.66% for FSM and 0.12 for non-FSM, compared to 0.45% and 0.23% nationally.

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A Governor asked what K means under SEN. Ian explained that this is students who haven't got an EHCP, but who are receiving some support – they might have dyslexia or another diagnosis, but don't have an EHCP. **Action**
Ian explained that Looked After Children tend to have more permanent exclusions that any of the other groups, but they try and do their utmost not to exclude them – the only reason for doing so would be for the safety of other students.

A Governor asked about the ethnicity of the students permanently excluded and whether this says anything. Ian responded no, as the breakdown of ethnicity is the same as the population of the school.

The Head said there is however some correlation about where these students live and getting involved in the wrong things in these areas. When students are in school, they behave mainly the way we want them to do, but when they are at home, they tend to go back to what they know, which is really challenging for us.

Another Governor said, when you are looking at very low % rates, it can make it seem that there is an affect because of the small numbers. Ian responded that it doesn't matter what the rete is, as long as it is in line with national. **The same Governor responded that it would only take one more a year to make this higher, as it is a very small number.** Ian responded that they always start the year with a 0 target, because they know that the life chances of these students is significantly affected, but they have to consider the efficient education and safety of everyone else. Realistically they'd like below 0, but would want less than 4.

The Head added that they are not focused on numbers, when Ofsted were in, they weren't worried because we could justify each and every permanent exclusion. We sometime have to make tough decisions around the safety and security of other students; however, it is also about the culture of our school and having these young people in the system doesn't help. For us it is about brave leadership and to being able to say that our Cantell community is the most important – we don't like to permanently exclude anyone, but sometimes we have to.

A Governor agreed that statistics are not the driver for this. The Head responded that five is too many, but they had to happen and every single one of them is justifiable. Ian added that Compass had agreed that every single one of these students needed to be there.

A Governor commented that he has sat on a lot of Permanent exclusion panel hearings and when they look at the cases, and why the school couldn't have offered anything else, this is always clear. The interventions and help that these students have been offered or received is amazing and in the vast majority of cases, the students or their parents thank the school for the work they have done. It is not something that is going wrong in school, there are a whole host of reasons why they get to this point and it is not through lack of trying.

05/26 **Results**

Rhys Fehners reported on some individual students who had received absolutely fantastic results and great outcome. Rhys commented that it is all about the journey,

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including for some students who had come from Ukraine, as we sometimes forget about the journeys of these students and the support and development they receive. **Action**

Rhys presented the English and Maths headlines for the last three years compared to the predicted grades:
7+ Eng and Maths – 9% (11%), 2024 – 7.5% (12.5%, 2023 – 13.1% (12%)
5+ Eng and Maths – 49.2% (43.1%), 2024 – 45.4% (32.9%), 2023 – 41.0% (34%)
4+ Eng and Maths – 65.3% (67.5%, 2024 – 65.8% (63%), 2023 – 63.8% (63%)

The Chair asked what these students had come in with. Rhys responded that it is hard because these students didn't sit their SATs during COVID – we did our own assessments when they arrived at Cantell, and worked out a 0.3% average. Rhys said that he believes they have added value. The Head said that the key figure to focus on for added is the APS.

Rhys presented the APS overview for 2025, compared to the previous two years and pointed out that there has been an increase in all subjects compared to these years predicted grade and a large increase on 2023, apart from Languages at 4.69, compared to 434 in 2024 and 4.73 in 2023.

Rhys pointed out that this year only 22% of students were taking a language, whereas last year 40% had, which has affected the APS.

A Governor asked why there had been such a big increase in students taking a language last year. The Head responded that this is down to student choice.

A Governor asked if there are any concerns about the quality of marking this year – is it better than last year? Rhys said that it is still variable. The biggest issue is with Maths, where they are seeing strong inconsistences – they will put putting in papers for remark in the coming days.

The Head said that on entry broadly, Cantell students are predicted a D grade on average, but actually leave with a very strong C, pushing into B. So added value last year was 0.21%, and if P8 was around this year, it would be higher than this, so strong progress.

A Governor asked is P8 is different. Rhys responded that it is, it is the best 8 grades and APS is the difference in progress made against other students in similar schools. The Head added that generally they would call it Sig-, and in Southampton we are the third lowest.

Rhys explained that there will be no P8 figure this year, as a results of there being no SATs during COVID and there is therefore no national baseline to follow and no standards nationally. The Head added that this will be the case again next year, so the current Year 10 will have no P8 again.

Governors NOTED the Key Groups – Rhys explained that English and Maths 7+ and 5+ students have improved in line with their non-pupil premium and non-pupil premium peers and the gap remains the same. The next steps will be to continue driving up the outcomes for pupil premium students by maintaining pupil premium as a whole school focus – low attendance and boy pupil premium students will be a key focus for the Year 11 team.

The Head commented that results are not just an indicator of the school, they are also about the cohort of students as well, and there are different challenges around this.

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Out of the 12 schools that have published, Cantell is only one of four schools that has increased its APS, although this will not be published. **Action**

Rhys reported that girls out performed boys and particularly pupil premium boys, who did less well. Rhys added that this was shared on the recent Inset day and that it is a focus and there is a process for this.

A Governor commented that there appears to be a big challenge with 7+ for FSM students. Rhys agreed that there is a bigger split between boys and girls this year.

A Governor asked whether there are more girls than boys. Rhys responded no, usually there are more girls who are middle to lower on entry, but last year there were more girls who were higher. The Head added that at Cantell there is still a 60/40 split for boys and girls.

Another Governor said if you say that there are big changes each cohort year, what is the risk next year when the focus is on FSM boys? Rhys responded that when he looked at the current Year 11 and Year 10, when they got to DC3, boys were behind the girls by 3 points – at this point they decided that boys were the priority. The Head commented that he had asked the same question and Rhys had assured him that he had looked at the results and there was a difference.

Rhys added that this could have been caused by COVID, but they need to look at it now. The Head commented that the national data also reflects that girls do better.

The Chair asked whether this is looked at from Year 7 up? Rhys responded yes, they do and it was looked at during the Inset day, and we always change the focus year on year, so there are different areas of focus for each year group. **WGB 6/11/25**

The Head said that they need to tighten up some of the tracking and noting of assessment information lower down, but are happy with QA and data collection, but need to be more robust on the data collection.

It was agreed that Rhys would come back and present Assessment data across the board.

A Governor said that she heard it mentioned a few times last year, that this is a challenging group. The Head said yes, that is right, although they have had a good start to the year, we are throwing everything at them.

Rhys reported that EAL students are doing really well and are in line with other years, although 7+ students may have missed a year of education, they are in line with how they have always performed. Non-EAL boys/pupil premium, we are making sure we are doing everything we can and they are a priority for Rhys.

SEN also changes year on year and is a hard group to read in terms of progress. They will continue to work with these students, giving them the best pastoral care and will continue to support them on to their next destination. The Head added that SEN includes SEMH (social, emotional, mental health) students who have complex needs, which might mean they are not in school and have lower outcomes.

<u>Priorities</u>

Priority 1 - Attendance is key at 93%

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The Head informed Governors that the difference is stark – if students are in this is what they get. Rhys said that they are really honest with the students and say that we have subject experts and if you are in you will do well. The key groups are monitored and support and these little things make all the difference.

Action

A Governor asked whether the table provided in the powerpoint is shared with everybody? Rhys responded yes, it is shared with staff and students to show what they can achieve and it is also included in the reports which go home to parents. The Head added that they talk from the start about what students can achieve – some parents get it, but some don't.

A Governor asked if there is a risk that we are confusing correlation with causation, as those who turn up will achieve every year and those who turn up will get the highest grades anyway. The Head responded that when they look at the progress of the low attainment students it is really strong, if you are a neuro typical student, you might have a couple of bits missing – if you are a neuro divergent student, it weakens things a lot. If you are Pupil Premium, the environment at home might not be supporting learning and this makes it more significant. The Head added, for us the strongest progress will be made in lesson every day, otherwise a students' learning will not be as secure.

WGB 6.11.25

The Head added, if you come from a background of strong parental support it helps, but by and large our view is, be in every day and don't miss lessons.

It was AGREED that Rhys would provide attendance versus results figures to include Pupil Premium and lower attaining Pupil Premium groups against high achievers.

Priority 2: HPPA

Rhys informed Governors that during the Inset day all the students who came in at the top of their groups were identified and will be a priority for their teachers – this is from Year 7 through to Year 11 and these students need to be pushed as they are HPPA, to get their best results. Interventions will be put in if needed to help them get the best results possible. The Head added that again, those whose attendance is below 93% will not achieve.

Rhys talked Governors through his table in the presentation, explaining that they want HPPA students to get the best results and come out with all 9s.

Priority 3: Boys

Rhys outlined the grades for boys and girls for the current Year 11 and Year 10 students, highlighting that there is a difference between boys and girls. Rhys added, when this was reflected in the exam results, he had wanted to make sure that this is a key priority. Rhys added that they need to identify these boys and work with them in lessons and not just accept what they want us to accept.

The Chair said that you have talked about the 'average child' – do they understand the steps they need to take and how they move themselves up? The Head responded that they don't set targets anymore, they believe that any child can move between the bands and that individual feedback gives them a very clear guide as to what they need to do to improve. Every child can achieve what they want to achieve, as long as they do the work and take the feedback.

The Chair asked, when this information goes home, does it make them happy. The Head responded that results day is really positive and parents and students were

happy with their results – the curriculum is ambitions, but if you are doing well in the curriculum, you are making progress. The Head added that it is a stepped approach and there is a system where students are in different groups that they can move through – this system will be reviewed going forward because it was set up after levels went away – Kat Cox will be building on this.

Action

The Chair said that her concern is making children feel that they are not worthy. The Head responded that this is not the case, we are ambitious for our students, but recognise that some students get a 3, which is great for them – we are all about progress.

The Chair asked whether the students know they are making progress? The Head said that this is around the feedback they get from their teachers when they get told what they need to do to improve. Reports go home and there are Parents Evenings, which is a way that they get information on how they are doing. Rhys added that all students feel supported because their teachers are there to support them.

The Chair responded that her concern is about students giving up, because they don't feel supported and they then loose heart. The Head said that they are supported and if they drop, there are different levels of intervention – we tell them that we are here to support them all the way and there are interventions running all the way from Year 11 down through the lower year groups.

The Staff Governor said that the policy across the school is to try to get our students to maximise their potential – it is complex because we have got some cases, particularly in boys that don't see the relevance and only want to get what they need, to do what they want to, when they leave school. There is only so much any school can do. The Head added that the ones that tend to give up are the ones that don't attend and when they come back in, they are lost and no matter how much you support them, they can switch off, which is why attendance is so important.

A Governor commented that this is the point of the careers support that is provided as well. Rhys said yes, the IAG, which is working with students and supporting them to understand that there are opportunities for them. The Head added that there are students making strong progress in KS3 through the curriculum and this is monitored by Claire Herridge through QA and Rhys through the assessment information, which is done twice a year.

A Governor said to Rhys, that they haven't gone through the individual subjects – are there any that have over or under performed, or any information on groups that they should be looking at? Rhys responded that he has shared this information with the SLT, but Photography is low, but Statistics, Maths and Geography are very high performers.

The Head commented that there are very few subjects that have underperformed. Photography is a new and growing subject, which they need to look at. History is an area of focus and a priority, because of the less experienced team and Business Studies hasn't got a Head of Department and the moment, and is being overseen by the Faculty Leader.

WGB Dec Mtg

The Same Governor commented that in previous years, English has been a focus. The Head responded that it always will be a focus.

The Governor said that there has been a lot of work done to improve writing and stamina – is there a feeling that this had paid off? The Head responded that it is

too early to tell. They are going through the scrips and putting in remarks currently, but can look at this information at the next meeting. **Action**

06/26 **Minutes of the Meeting held on the 10th July 2025**

Governors APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th July 2025 as a true record of the meeting, which were signed accordingly by the Chair.

07/26 **Governor Code of Conduct**

Governors discussed communication and whether they should be in WhatsApp's groups with other parents and it was agreed that this is not a problem, as long as sensitive or any other information relating to the school is not divulged.

Governors APPROVED the Governor Code of Conduct for 2025/25, which will be displayed on the school's website.

08/26 **Annual Review**

The Chair reminded Governors to complete the Register of Business Interests and Skills Audit and return them to the Clerk to Governors. **All**

09/26 **Head's Update**

The Head provided a update for Governors for the start of the 2025/26 academic year:

- Very pleased with the GCSE results this year and Results Day was really lovely, with lots of parents in attendance.
- APS – Cantell is only one of four schools who have improved.
- The Inset Days were really successful and staff value the time to prepare for the year ahead. There were key messages in the morning and department time in the afternoons.
- Thrive 2 and SEND have been successful and we will also have Thrive 3 and the extension work will start this academic year.
- Rachel Bridges, Cantell SENCo, has been seconded to the SLT and the Head will continue to line manage SEN.
- Two deputy SENCos have also been appointed due to the number of students with SEND.
- The Inset days focused on Pastoral due to the number of students with SEND and we want staff to identify the communication of an issue, vs students being naughty – this is a challenge.
- Neuro divergent families were sent their child's Support Plan last week, so the parents can contribute to this and let us know how we can do things differently – this has never happened before.
- Staff wellbeing – the zen room is up and running. The school has contributed nearly nothing to the room as staff have provided everything in it. People have brought things such as a sofa in.
- The Wellbeing Champions are being appointed as we speak.
- Tim Norman from the University and an ex-parent, will be working with Paul Bridges our Assisted Technology Champion, on AI.
- Kat Cox will be reviewing the assessment information and she will also be working with Paula Whiteley, to carry out a review of our management information system. We currently use SIMs and it looks like if we go online, we will get a better system. This will be a lot of work and will take up to a year to complete.

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- The new Year 7 have had a really strong start to the year and they have been incredible, particularly around behaviour points – they are running around everywhere and loving it! **Action**
- Behaviour points are at around 30-35 a day, which is excellent and low.
- The Head was pleased to announce that there are around 54 students that had abnormal behaviour points last year, who have not had any in the first two weeks of this year. Their SLT links will be speaking to them and the Head will be writing to parents.
- QA continues to be exceptional and helps us understand what is happening on the ground and what we need to adapt. We have only been in lessons for two weeks, but we have seen 68 lots of learning, which is published to the staff and we speak to Faculty Leaders about what we have seen, so they can feed back this information to their staff on a weekly basis.
- Attendance has been strong, and home visits are taking place to try and get students back in.
- Suspensions remain below the national average, but each suspension is subject to a review, but we will continue to act decisively for the benefit of our young people.
- We have a new school mascot called 'Spark' created from our student's design. We took lots of things from different students' ideas, and they all got a reward. Spark will be visiting lessons and going on trips.
- External: the Head has been asked by the DfE to present on Attainment, KS2 – 3 Transition and he has asked John Draper to help him present to show a comprehensive learning journey from primary to secondary. The Head said that the way we work now is completed different and we need to take it back down into KS2.
- Raise Advisers – the Head has been approached about Cantell being a support school and they are currently in discussions about any support we may be able to provide. The Head said that Cantell was one of the schools receiving support years ago and are now in a position to be able to support other schools. This would be for the kids, which is something we need to remain focussed on.

The Head summarised that it has been a very good start to the new academic year and he's very grateful for the amazing staff and students at Cantell.

10/26 **Chair Update**

The Chair said that she has been in twice so far this term, once for a safeguarding visit and the other to see the Head and staff. The Chair added that she has spent some time with Ian Creswell during her safeguarding visit and will be meeting with Jo Taft, the deputy safeguard office, over the next couple of weeks.

The Chair commented that Jo has settled in really well and has contributed very quickly to the role, which is very hard, but we will make sure she is looked after. During her meeting with Ian, they went through everything and she spoke to the nurse about what's happening in school.

The Chair said, as Safeguarding Governor, she is very pleased with the training tonight.

The Chair said that she will be coming in again soon for another visit and asked Governors to contact their link department to arrange a visit. **All**

11/26 **Any Other Business**

<u>Visit to CPSD</u>

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Bhupinder reported that he had visited Tina in CPSD, but hadn't been able to visit a classroom, although it had been a good visit as he'd wanted to find out about the approach and was pleased to say that it was based on the needs of the students. **Action**

They had gone for a walk to meet some students from different year groups, and to ask what they thought and all of them were very positive about what they feel they get out of their lessons. They feel their lessons are unique to what they receive in other lessons and it gives them an insight into the things they should be thinking about. Tina expressed this as teaching for life, not for exams, which is a lovely way to represent the topic.

Bhupinder informed Governors that he always finishes a visit by asked what they'd like him to do, and Tina said that she wanted to invite some groups in.

Action Clerk

As Tina has now left Cantell, the Clerk will send an introductory email to Gemma Dyne and Bhupinder, so they can arrange a visit.

Bhupinder added that the only question he pushed on was how would we know if it is making a difference and although it was difficult for Tina to quantify this, she was able to share some data to show this.

12/26 **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 6th November 2025, 5.30 p.m.

That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
5.	05/26	Rhys Fehners to provide across the board assessment data.	Rhys Fehners	Next Year 11 update – December meeting
6.	05/26	HPPA Attendance and results. Rhys Fehners to provide figures for HPPA to include Pupil Premium, lower attaining Pupil premium groups against higher achievers.	Rhys Fehners	Next meeting
7.	05/26	Writing and stamina – Rhys Fehners to provide information on whether this work has paid off.	Rhys Fehners	Next meeting
8.	09/26	Governors to complete the Register of Business Interests and Skills Audit and return them to the Clerk.	All	ASAP
9.	10/26	Reminder to Governors to arrange a link visit.	All	ASAP
9.	11/26	Clerk to send an introductory email to Bhupinder/Gemma Dyne.	Clerk	Complete

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