Cantell School
Minutes of the Whole Governing Body Meeting
held on Thursday 26th March 2026, 5.30 p.m.

Present:	**In Attendance:**
Glynis Alexander (Chair)	Rachel Bridges, SENCo
Julian Bryant	Mark Bagust, Trust School Improvement Officer
Harry Kutty (Head)	Claire Herridge, Deputy Headteacher
Emma Bradshaw	Rhys Fehners, Assistant Headteacher
John Groves	Michelle Burt, Clerk
Ben Hiett	
Peter Hilditch	**Apologies:**
Nicola Hunt	John Draper
	Bhupinder Siran

50/26 **Declaration Pecuniary or Business Interests** **Action**

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Business Interests.

51/26 **SEND White Paper**

Rachel Bridges reported that the SEND White Paper for SEND reforms, came out in February and includes three levels of support for students:

- Targeted – classroom adaptations and small group interventions
- Targeted Plus – support from "Experts at Hand" in maintained schools.
- Specialist – support through nationally defined Specialist Provision Packages to underpin EHCPs.

Other changes that will take place include:

- New individual Support Plans for students with SEND, which already happens at Cantell.
- Retaining and improving current EHCPs (no change until 2030).
- Inclusive Mainstream Fund and re-balancing funds from the high-needs block to go directly into school budgets.
- Improved transition Post 16, some of which is also already happening at Cantell,
- Improved SEND training – a lot of training has already taken place at Cantell during Inset days and T&L briefings, so again, Cantell is ahead of the game.
- £3.7 billion of capital investment to create Inclusion Bases in mainstream settings.
- Access to the new Experts at Hand service, which provides expertise from educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.

Rachel informed Governors, from a school point of view, the key things they are looking at is the key support and working with parents on strategies. This is all in place at Cantell for every student with SEND needs anyway, so it will only be a matter of some tweaking. Rachel added that although there will be three new layers of support, they will not change what they do at Cantell, as everything is evidenced and RAG rated anyway.

Rachel commented, in terms of creating Inclusion Basis in mainstream sessions, there is a slight difference between this and Thrive. Thrive is for students with EHCPs, and is funded – Intervention bases are more like L2L or the Support/Welfare Hubs, and as Cantell has three of these already, this is something again, that might only need a few

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tweaks. Rachel explained that they have also volunteered to be part of a LA project led by Whole School SEND, to run a trial of what this will look like.

Another part of what schools will be required to do is to participate in local school groups to share resources and improve support for children with SEND. Rachel explained that two years ago the LA set up a pilot to look at support for students in a cluster across the city. This was mostly with the Trust schools and Portswood and they were able to bid for funding, which has been used to buy some equipment for the primary schools and some assisted technology equipment at Cantell. **Action**

Another requirement will be to publish an Inclusion Strategy, which sets out the plan to use inclusion funding effect. Rachel explained that this is not currently in place, but the SEND Information Report and Action plan, displayed on the school website, can be adapted, so again this may just need a tweak.

Rachel explained the timeline for the SEND reforms:
Phase one – 2026 to 2028: investment and building new system.
Phase two – 2028 to 2029: improved support
Phase three – 2029/30: Future system.

Rachel informed Governors that she would keep them up to date with progress.

A Governor asked what the timeline is for getting a care plan in place. Rachel explained that when a referral goes in for an assessment, the LA have 6 weeks to say if they agree to an assessment. They then have another 4 weeks to put this in place, and once complete, it will be reviewed annually. Rachel added that some funding will already be in place to do this.

A Governor asked if these plans will affect the expansion of Thrive. Rachel said no, it will not be affected.

Another Governor commented that it seems like most of this is covered at Cantell anyway, so it shouldn't cause any sleepless nights. Rachel agreed, adding that what they do across the school is amazing and she hasn't seen it in any other school.

The Chair asked what happens in a lesson when it is covered by agency staff? Rachel said that cover staff will be provided with information about any additional needs students in their lesson may have, and there is also information available on the school system. Claire Herridge added that they are also provided with seating plans and Support Plans for the children.

A Governor asked about the £3.7 billion of capital investment for Inclusion bases and whether Cantell is ahead of the game because they already have this. Rachel said yes, she's not sure how this will work, but the funding will be shared with all schools, but hopefully the pilot will show how this works. **Another Governor asked whether there is a risk that Cantell might lose out on this.** Rachel responded no.

The Head commented, in terms of supply teachers, although there is a structure in place, we cannot always ensure that this differential happens, although it is now very rare that they have to use supply. The Head added that they will need to look at reflection, a part of the White Paper, to see what kind of reflection takes place, and although they are ahead of the game, this is something they need to work on. Rachel agreed that students need to reflect sometimes, and come to the Support Hub, or some will do some 1:1 work, to reflect on what has happened.

The Staff Governor asked whether there is a higher proportion of SEN students who go into Reflection? Rachel responded yes, and there is particularly a higher proportion in Years 8 & 9, and staff are working on supporting them. The Head added

that they work really hard to make sure they use an approach that ensures students are going to the right place.

The Chair thanked Rachel for her report, and said Well done, as it is good to know that we are ahead of the game. Her only concern is how they are going to find all of the staff required, as it take a long time to train people. **Action**

52/26 **Peer to Peer Review Summary and Plans for Improvement**

Mark Bagust provided a paper outlining the top 10 strengths identified in the Cantell Peer Reviews, which took place on the 13th December 2024, 26th March 2025 and the 25th November 2025.

Mark reported that the process was introduced across the Trust and has been running for two years. Schools have agreed to have a group of senior leaders and middle leaders come into each other schools, termly, which Mark facilitates and he moderates and has an oversight of the process and then produces a report.

Mark explained that the reviews capture the key finds of the strong provision at Cantell and in each of them some pertinent next steps and areas to work on. Mark said that they have looked at some of the key strengths from the key reports, that the reviews have identified and what is consistent across all three reviews is the strong pastoral care and support in school and that students report about how safe they feel and in particular around Year 6 to 7 transition.

Governors NOTED that the reviewers come from the Trust Primary schools and when a Student Voice is arranged, they are always with students who came from their primaries. The visitors are always very impressed with the quality of teaching and the strong subject knowledge and agree that secondary teachers are subject experts, whilst pedological, but they are always able to learn from each other.

Mark added that there is always a really strong SEND focus in the Peer Reviews, which are really well thought through to make sure SEND students are supported and included.

They have also considered transition, and during visits they have looked at what Year 7 are learning and they got the sense that students are prepared for their transition journey and that Cantell provides more consistency and support than other schools and that we are particularly focused on secondary teachers adapting the same kind of methods they use in primary, particularly in Maths, to allow a seamless progression journey for our students.

The Reviewers also liked the T&L ingredients and the key expectations of what happens in lessons, such as Attack Words, which they can see is important across the school and that staff look at reading a lot. They were also very impressed by the phonics provision.

Mark informed Governors that Behaviour always comes out really strong, and a high level of engagement and independence is also something they pick up on as it adds to learning. Students are also able to explain clearly and articulately what they are learning.

In terms of leadership, the high expectations of leaders and middle leaders comes through and a quote by one of the Trust Primary Heads, in summing up teachers at Cantell was ‘botherdness’, which resonated with a lot of people.

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Mark informed Governors that these are some key things that have come out of the Reviews and he hope this gives Governors some assurance that what the Head and other leaders tell you about what happens across the school and in the QA systems, is happening.

Action

The Chair said that it is interesting to see how the Trust Headteacher's work together to make a seamless conveyor belt and it is a shame that it isn't happening throughout the city with people working together – she is really pleased that it is happening at Cantell.

Mark responded that it's not always about students, it's about staff as well and this collaboration is really powerful and adds to the professional knowledge of our leaders and those from the primary schools. Mark added that he was dubious about the process at first, in relation to how it would work, but he has been pleasantly surprised.

Claire Herridge added that everybody involved has taken part in a CPD session, and the process has now evolved with our Middle Leaders also going out to do a Peer-to-Peer Review.

A Governor asked when the next review is due to take place. Mark responded, next week.

A Governor asked whether there has been any feedback from the reviews that show any areas to work on? Mark replied that Claire would explain more about some of the areas that they have been looking at.

Another Governor asked about KS2 into KS3 transition, when she has been in for her Link visit, staff and students are happy, because it avoids texts being repeated. Mark said that there has been a lot of work and organisation that has taken place, and a lot around expectations as well. Students know how to do things, they just need to be reminded, not taught it again.

<u>Areas of Focus</u>

Claire outlined the timeline for three Peer to Peer Reviews:
December 2024 – English, Reading & KS2-3 Transition
March 2025 – Mathematics
November 2025 – KS4 Offer & SEND Support.

Claire shared the focus from each review, along with the any points for action:

Focus 1: English and Oracy KS2-KS3

Claire explained that the aim was to share phonic strengths and strategies in mainstream lessons and the action was to deliver this through staff training in the reading hub across the school. Staff undertook CPD to share these strengths and there has also been a regular reading spot light, which is shared with staff and located on the CPD teaching and learning website – this contains strategies for staff to use in lessons for these students.

Handwriting skills were also highlighted in this review, with the primary staff noting that they draft and redraft work, which doesn't happen at Cantell, and it was thought that handwriting therefore needed work. As a result, a member of the English team is now working with some of the primary schools on handwriting skills and in school, there has been a focus on work pride and students are expected to have pride in what they do – this has been a major focus.

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Focus 2: Writing like a mathematician, KS2-3 transition, subject expert creation.

Claire explained that the maths detectives had been created as a result of the review, and the aim for students to write like mathematicians. The maths detectives has been shared with Year 7 and Catherine Merrell-Jones has done a brilliant job of creating this with her knowledge of the KS2 data and the cohorts coming through. **Action**
Another aim was for the subject expert guidance to be explored and shared widely, as we want all students to be experts and getting them to want this, is important. A lot of work has been carried out with students and this continues to be a whole school priority for the year and a focus within the evolved subject development cycle.

Focus 3: Pastoral care, mock exams, CIAG (Careers, information, advice and guidance), cognitive load.

Claire explained in terms of the SEND focus, a lot of information was being shared with staff, which was becoming too much to cope with resulting in cognitive overload. Rachel Bridges has done a lot of work in this area and as a result, there is now a SEND spot light sent out to staff and teaching & learning breakfasts have been organised with a SEND focus area. SEND continues to be a whole school focus for the current year.

Another aim was to create a updated support framework for SEMH students, so they don't feel overwhelmed. Students are now able to come out of their classroom and stand outside the door by a poster with different zones, to help them identify how they are feeling and regulate themselves before going back to their lesson. Staff regularly come out and check on these students, who stand by the classroom door with the door open, so they can hear the lesson.

The Chair asked, whilst these students are standing outside, does anyone monitor how long they are there for and how often they come out of class? Claire responded yes, there are some truancy issues but some students just want use the poster, but because of the quality first teaching, standing outside is always a last resort.

The Chair asked who monitors how often students are coming out of class? Claire responded that it is marked on SIMs when they come out of class. **The Chair asked who picks these students up if it gets too much?** The Staff Governor responded that he would pick this up if he felt a student was doing it an awful lot and he would complete a cause for concern form.

The Chair asked, if a student was upset, would someone take them away? Claire responded that Patrol would be called and SLT are always around. The Staff Governor added that in most corridors, there is a member of staff sat working, so they are able to talk to students.

Claire informed Governors that the last area of focus for SEND is around KS4 and CIAG (Careers Information, Advice and Guidance), which came out of the review as exceptional. The next step is around Year 11 Mock interviews and how to prepare students for the type of questions that might be asked. Some work is now taking place with Andy Paterson and Steve Godwin, who will organise a student voice before the interviews take place.

Claire said, to finish, she wanted to highlight the 'Starlight's that were identified as part of the three reviews:

- Exceptional Pastoral Care & Botherdness
- Embedded T&L Ingredients
- Exemplary Behaviour & Relationships.

53/26 **Year 11 Update & CTLS, March 2026**

Rhys informed Governors that the current Year 11 are a challenging cohort and he provided a Year 11 Update for DC2 (data collection 2) and a CTL update for March 2026.

Average Attainment 8 score: DC2, 4.38, DC1, 4.48, compared to a score of 4.55 at the 2024 exams. Rhys explained that a score of 4.38 means that it has gone down, although 20 students are in the high A8 band and doing better. **Action**

7+ English – DC2 14.1%, compared to DC1, 16.5% and 2024 DC2, 17%
7+ Maths – DC2 16.4%, compared to DC1, 15.7% and 2024 DC2, 19%
7+ Eng & MA – DC2, 10.9%, compared to DC1, 11.8% and 2024 DC2, 12%

Rhys commented that 7+ English has slipped to 14.1% Maths continues to rise every year and a lot of work has taken place on stamina in English.

5+ English – DC2, 36.3%, compared to DC1 40.8% and 2024 DC2, 38%
5+ Maths – DC2 50.8%, compared to DC1, 49.4% and 2024 DC2, 50%
5+ Eng & MA – DC2, 32.4%, compared to DC1, 33.7%, and 2024 DC2 31%

Rhys commented that 5+ English and Maths remains consistent, although English has slipped by 10%, Maths is increasing. Rhys added that this Year group is lethargic and are not coming along with them and are having to be dragged to the end.

4+ English – DC2, 60.9%, compared to DC1 62.4% and 2024 DC2 65%
4+ Maths – DC2, 67.6%, compared to DC1, 64.7% and 2024 DC2, 70%
4+ Eng & MA – DC2, 54.3%, compared to DC1, 53.7% and 2024 DC2 61%.

Rhys outlined some of the interventions that have been put in place for the current Year 11 cohort over the year, which includes:

- Two walking, talking mocks for English Literature and Language.
- Targeted interventions for 28 students on a Saturday morning – last year this was attended by 25/26 students, this year only 8 students have attended.
- Two weekend sessions on how to revise for English Literature and Language – out of 53 students, only 29 took up this offered, compared to the Year 10 Saturday session, when 170 students attended – this is a challenging year group to get in.
- Targeted English Literature and Language Lesson A groups.
- Upgrades for stamina and writing.

In Maths, staff are going above and beyond what they usually do, and have also put on walking, talking mocks, targeted Lesson A and Upgrades. Rhys added that they are also putting on holiday sessions in April for Maths students.

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The Chair asked if the current Year 11 came in low with no SAT results. Rhys explained that they went into lockdown in Year 5/6 and have no SATs data, we did our own CATs tests, when they got here.

The Chair said if the CATs results were low, how much added value have you done? Rhys said that they can only do so much, but looking at the SISRA 2024 data, P8 for this cohort is at 0.4 – 0.5, which is 0.5 of a grade better than national, although they are not able to use this figure.

The Chair commented that this is something that shows they came in low, and that we tested them, but they have done better than you thought. Rhys said they are not strong, but we are getting the best out of them that we can.

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The Chair asked if anything has been learnt from previous results, about if anything should have been done earlier. Rhys responded that after each data collection, they present to all subject leaders and they are pushing down each year, as to when they put interventions in and to identify who the students are that need support and interventions.

The Chair asked if anything has been changed that is being taught to counter this. Rhys replied that they can't change anything they teach, but this Year 11 cohort has been given a lot more support, but they now have to keep this going through each year group. **Action**

The Chair asked if there is any year group looking the same as this Year 11 cohort? Rhys responded that Year 8, and they will be adapting how they work with these students.

The Vice Chair said, as an observation, that statistics and results are one thing, but from a Governors point of view, is what are you doing to make a difference. You are aware of this cohort and doing a lot of different things and adapting some of the teaching to help, and from his point of view, this is as important as some of the results might be.

Rhys reported that Combined Science has started to go up at DC2 and is an important group, that they are working with:
7+ Combined Science, DC2, 12.9%, compared to DC1, 11.7% and 2024 DC2, 11%
5+ Combined Science, DC2, 37.4%, compared to DC1, 38.3% and 2024 DC2, 44%
4+ Combined Science, DC2, 58.8%, compared to DC1, 59.1% and 2024, DC2 66%

Rhys informed Governors that Triple Science is hard to compared against previous cohorts, as previously they only offered Triple Science to top sets, and it has now been opened up to everybody. Improvements are however being made, but it's not like 2024 – there have been targeted interventions over Easter and P7 interventions, which unfortunately, has been difficult because it's on a Friday. Students who have attended, were identified by their teachers.

Rhys went through the EBAC subjects, compared to 2024, noting that Humanities is lower than previously.
Languages: APS 5.08, 2024 5.34
Humanities: APS 4.64, 2024 3.21

The Open Bucket, which is all GCSE subjects was at APS, 4.28 compared to 4.60 in 2024.

Rhys reported that the subjects with positive residuals are Art, BTEC Music, Photography, RE and Statistics and Hair & Beauty have been fabulous and have been putting on extra interventions to get work done.

Rhys explained that they have also put on:
- Special assemblies, such as one with Aaron Phillips,
- Year 10 and 11 parents' session with Lorraine Lee, on revision.
- Empower sessions on revision
- Mock Interview days
- Barton Peveril has been in to talk to students about what happens if they only achieve a 4 and were honest and told students that if they want to get into their college, what they need to do – 170 students have applied to go to Barton Peverill.

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- GRAPE Days (GCSE Review and Prepare days), which were changed slightly, with students receiving their Mock results on the day and asked to picture what would happen if it was the summer.
- Panel meetings with 60 students and parents.

The Chair asked what the result of this? Rhys responded that the vast majority of students said 'ooh', but it is all about what they do now.

The Chair asked if any of the students were talked to individually? Rhys replied that all the students had a 1:1 conversation with a member of SLT or their Year Leader. The Head did an assembly on the importance of homework and gave an inspirational speech – Rhys added that they are trying everything they can. Rhys said that he himself has also done an assembly for those students who aren't getting it and provided an email address so they can email in, but no one has yet. Panel meetings were also held after Easter for 18 students, who they think they can make a difference to.

Action

Rhys handed out a summary of all the additional interventions arranged for Year 11, commenting that he hoped this reassures Governors, as they can see that it is quite an extensive offering. Rhys added that they will also continue to put on sessions over Easter and the May half term, as well as during school time.

A Governor commented that she is struggling to understand, because this is not representative of her son, who is in Year 11 and she is not sure why students are struggling, because they have received all these extra interventions, right through from Year 10. Rhys replied that he thinks it's because they didn't have to do any tests during Covid and some of them were thinking that they would get the same treatment as happened then.

The Staff Governor commented that Rhys had said that both Years 5 & 6 were affected by going into lockdown, when they get to KS4, you can imagine that not being in school had was a huge chunk of their development.

A Governor reported that he went to the Year 10 information evening, and it was really busy – another Governor confirmed that this was also for Year 11 parents. Rhys commented that there was a bigger proportion of Year 10 parents present, but they will keep pushing.

The Chair commented that this is the problem, you keep pushing, even though you know what will happen. Rhys responded that they will never stop pushing.

The Vice Chair commented that as Governors they are not necessarily after the grades, but looking at what goes on behind it, it is hard to think of what else you can do – well done.

A Governor said that all this is brutal for staff. Rhys responded, when you see everything offered at weekends, it is a lot, but staff are given time off in lieu, which they can take at any time. We always look after our staff and there is no pressure to do a session – there is a give and take, and we applaud everything they do. Other schools don't offer anything like this.

The Chair said that this shows a love of the students, but what more can you do? Rhys replied that they will do everything above and beyond, to get these students the best outcomes.

Rhys presented the data for Year 10 at DC2: 4.98 and 0.51, compared to 5.01 and 0.54 at DC1 and 4.55 and 0.2, 2024 exams.

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The Chair asked whether this data is anything to do with what they are learning at a particular time? Rhys replied that you need to look at this as they go through the curriculum and the content, science does a good job at revision, and their results go up and up.

Governors NOTED the data at DC2 for English & Maths, Combined and Triple Science, EBAC and Open Bucket subjects and Rhys commented that the data is looking really strong compared to this time last year. Rhys added that they are doing a great job with Year 10 and the top end is looking really strong – he believes that the current Year 11 were an anomaly and we are now back to where we need to be for this year group.

Action

Rhys reported that meetings are taking place this week with students to reflect on their CTLs. Students will receive their reports, and the Green and Gold groups will go down and collect their Easter egg reward. The students in the Yellow, Pink and Red CTL groups will stay in their LA room and go through a PowerPoint on what they need to know for next time – the reports will then be used for individual conversations with students and if they have moved on, they will be able to compare where they are now.

Rhys informed Governors that all the CTL groups are moving upwards, apart from Year 11 and mainly speaking the commitment to learning and student grades is moving forward and they will be able to identify students who need help to move up.

The Vice Chair said that Rhys mentioned that the Gold and Green groups went and got their Easter eggs, what do the other groups get? Rhys responded that they only reward the Green and Gold groups, as an incentive, and the Gold students also get a pizza reward with the Head. This is meant as a reward and an incentive, and they can't reward everybody, but they will make sure that the students that missed out will get a conversation on how to get up to the next group, as it might just be a conversation that will help.

The Chair asked where attendance is in this. Rhys replied that attendance doesn't sit in the CTLs, just behaviour and homework. Students get a CTL for attendance, so they can see where they sit. **The Chair commented that they say, if you attend all the time, you will achieve more and there is a link.** Rhys agreed, adding that you're not in school, you're not learning.

54/26 **Welcome to New Staff Governor**

The Committee welcomed Julian Bryant at the new Staff Governor, who had been re-elected by school staff on the 2nd March 20026 for a further four-year term of office.

55/26 **Minutes of the Meeting held on the 5th February 2026**

Governors APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 5th February 2026 as a true record of the meeting, which were signed accordingly by the Chair.

56/26 **Matters Arising**

38/26 Late to Lessons

Rhys provided some information from Ian Creswell on late to lessons and the strategies used to get students into lessons on time.

The Chair asked whether Year Leaders look at the reasons for lateness. Rhys responded that they do and any reason other than a medical absence are not sanctioned.

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A Governor asked when students are late, do they come into school through the normal entrance. Rhys explained that any students who are late at the beginning of the day come in through the top entrance into the Year 11 Common Room, where a member of the admin team register them and Claire Herridge will then tell them if they have a Social Catch Up or a 3.00 – 4.00 p.m. catch up – this sanction is then logged on the system.

45/26 Staff Handbook
Agenda item for May Staffing Committee Meeting.

45/26 Policies – GovernorHub
Complete

45/26 Policy Spreadsheet – September Agenda **Action**
September Agenda.

All other Matters Arising are either on the agenda or complete.

57/26 **Head's Update**

The Head reported the following:

- **Careers and Guidance:** this term had a lot of activity around careers and guidance, particularly Year 8 events, including an event with NatWest and organisations across the city. There was also a Parents evening, which was well attended and the first ever NatWest Thrive event, which has had a big impact on engagement. There were 100 businesses in school this term and Andy Paterson and Steve Godwin should be praised for their brilliant work on
- **Curriculum and T&L:** We are proud about the quality of the curriculum and teaching, as well as the Peer Reviews and the work carried out with other schools. Claire's presentation earlier in the meeting was excellent and the way you can see the impact is fantastic. We are proud about the quality of the curriculum and teaching and learning, which remains a strength of the school.
- **Behaviour and attendance** are strong and behaviour points remain at around 4-5% of the school population, which is low and due to mainly the same students. The Head suggested that Governors ask Harriet and Karen Huelin about the additional work carried out in Year 8. Attendance remains good, although EID had an impact as the C codes will have a disparaging affect on attendance. Brian Lightman has reviewed this area recent and we are watching high attendance periods. **Agenda Item**
- **Commitment to learning** – this isn't just about rewards; it is an area we have really tried to focus on and have done more targeted work with groups of students whose CTLs are not what they should be. We have done a more targeted approach with Subject Leaders, and SLT, with a programme of support, and all the CTLs are moving in the right direction. Commitment to learning is not where we wanted it to be and we have made some changes, with positive results.
- **Year 11 outcomes**: this Year 11 cohort is academically weaker and more than usual are showing apathy towards their exams - the Head said he gets on well with this year group, but hasn't seen this apathy before. Attainment is weaker than the previous year although progress levels look reasonably strong, but we rest on our laurels with Year 11. We however have to support staff to focus on the other year groups, but will support Year 11 students up to their exams, but we have to be realistic on what we can do.

A Governor commented that he wasn't saying that teachers shouldn't do more, but was aware that teachers might need more of a break with Year 10, as we don't want people burning out. The Head responded that interventions shouldn't outweigh quality first teaching, but with this year group we felt we had to put in more

interventions. Next year, they will not have to put in as much, so there will be a break, and although there will be some interventions, it won't be to the same level.

The Governor asked in terms of Year 11, is the drop in attainment the same nationally or specific to Cantell. The Head responded that it is pretty mixed in other schools, but he hasn't seen any of their attainment.

- **Visits to school** – there have been various important visitors to school this half term, such as Rob Henderson, from the LA, Thomas Raymond from Oasis, senior leaders from the Blacdown Trust and a Headteacher from Reading. All the visitors were really impressed by the high level of commitment and focus on learning and one of the things that came through was the continued checking of student understanding and that students are in the right place to move on. The Head has also been on a couple of Ofsted Inspections, which is a big commitment, but something they do and Mark Bagust has also been working with another school, and will probably be able to bring stuff back that can be used at Cantell.
- **Visit to India** – this term we launch the Girl's Hawks academy with Hampshire Cricket, which will bridge the gap for cricket in schools and one of the things the Head has done in Delhi is to meet with the GMLR, the owners of Hampshire Cricket Club to discuss this opportunity for young people in Southampton. Girl's Hawks is huge across the city and Cantell will have a chance to take part in elite cricket.
- **School Finances –** Finance are looking positive against the budget and Peter Hilditch, the Chair of the Finance Committee, will provide more detail later in the meeting, but it is looking positive against what was predicted.
- **SEND/White Paper** – the Head hopes that Governors have been reassures by Rachel's presentation. We are receiving a lot more Subject Access Requests from parents, and whilst complaints remain low, they are taking up a lot of time, and are likely to grow in number, but we will continue to build on our SEND processes.
- **School Show -** the Head is aware that a number of Governors went to see the school show, 'a Little Shop of Horrors, thanks you to those of you that were able to make it as it matters to students and staff. We are looking at how we can support the students who worked on the show over the last six months and we want them to be able to continue to collaborate on creative projects.

Action

In summary the Head said it has been another strong, but challenging term, and in particular with Year 11, but they continue to be in a good place.

The Vice Chair said that he agrees with what the Head said about the students who took part in the school show and asked if he had anything in mind as to what this will look like? The Head said, last year we took students to a show in the West End, so something like this would be great and we will look at what we can do. We will be receiving payment for Mark's work in Basingstoke, which will be used for staff and students. **The Vice Chair agreed that this is a great idea.**

The Head explained that he has been in Delhi to visit the University of Southampton's Delhi campus and to meet up with students and faculty teams to see how well the programmes have been implemented and joint projects with Southampton. He also met with a private university, which we have recently put in a bid for 45k to take 25 disadvantaged students over to India next year. The Head said he was able to meet with some of the team when he was there and it would be life changing for our students – Jonathan and Harriet worked on the bid, and did a really good job, so we hope we are successful.

58/26 **Governor Link Visit Reports**

<u>John Groves – Science</u>

John reported that he came into school on a Saturday to see the Science Department's intervention session. There were four classes involved, with an average of 15 students per class and the session ran from 9.00 a.m. – 1.20 p.m.

John said the session was very good and I was good to see lots of students learning and revising on their own. They were learning about how to revise and how to build up a data base of what they have learnt – they also completed a revision exam paper.

His biggest observation was that although the students managed to get in for 9.00 a.m. on a Saturday, they were still late to their lesson by 10/15 minutes, which he couldn't understand and it was frustrating for the teachers to have to come away from the other students to explain what was happening. Students were relaxed whilst they were there, but there wasn't any drive to get in and get working in the right way and he's not sure of the disconnect. The students seemed to enjoy it and Rob and his team did a really great job.

Ben Hiett – Humanities **Action**

Ben reported that he visited Business and Travel & Tourism last week and it was really interesting to see KS4 in action. Ben had a really interesting conversation with Lucy Webb, the Faculty Lead for Humanities and they talked through these two subjects. They also went on a classroom tour and he visited a Student Voice and had an in-depth conversation with Megan Sargent, who teaches these subjects and is also Head of Interventions. Lucy also told ben about her 25-minute pre-school intervention sessions which target students who are predicted a 2-3 to get them up to a 4.

There had been some reports about behaviour in Business lessons, which was resolved with the use of the Reflection room and behaviour points.

The Chair asked if there has been any improvement. Ben replied that he's not sure, but will ask the question.

Ben said he saw Jonah teach Business – Jonah is from Ghana and is doing really well and is working with Lucy for additional support – he seemed very competent and is very charismatic and engaging.

Travel & Tourism lessons were very difference, because it is BTEC rather than GCSE and very course work based. Ben said that he saw some really interesting technology in the classroom and students were working with a real time language translation tool via a headset – some students had their own teacher, Suparna, who helps with the students with extra-needs and learning requirements. Ben said he had a chat with Suparna and Megan about Travel & Tourism and they got onto the subject of interventions on a Saturday.

Ben added that he wanted to check that Saturday sessions are not too much and there is no burn out, as this is a lot of interventions and something Governors should keep an eye on, in terms of student and staff working life balance. Ben said that he also wanted to raise how affective Suparna was in Travel & Tourism and he wondered whether there was any similar support needed in Business, as there was a mix in abilities that might benefit from a support assistant.

Ben raised one health and safety point about chair and desk being located right by the door, which didn't need to be there.

The Morrocco trip seemed amazing and a great opportunity for students and another example of excellent trips in the Humanities department.

Glynis Alexander – PE/General

Signed by Chair: Date: 14th May 2026

Glynis explained that she has been in several times, including the NatWest Day, which involved people from different areas of the country, who came in to work with students. There were at least 2/3 adults supporting each table of 9/10 students and there were games set up for students to use at breaktime. They also set up a stage, with some great lighting.

It was quite a long event, 9.00 am – 3.00 pm, with some small breaks and a lunch break, but the kids enjoyed it and were very good, it was a brilliant day and it was interested talking to staff, who said that it was the first time they have done this event. Brian Lightman was also there as well as someone from the LA – it was very interesting. The Staff Governor said that he didn't get to see the event, but attended some good sessions during the NatWest Careers Week – he was very impressed with the whole event.

In response to a question from a Governor as to how the students were selected to attend, it was confirmed that it was the higher achieving students. **Action**

The Chair has also been in to meet with Russ Grant, the Head of PE for her Governor Link visit. The Chair had wanted to meet with the whole of the PE team, but was unable to as they find it difficult to meet as a whole department due to timetabling issues, which she has spoken to Claire Herridge about, and she therefore met with the team individually, which was very interesting – they are a strong team, very sports minded and enjoy what they do.

The team informed the Chair of an issue with visitors coming in and removing/moving equipment, which is not always left where it should be and as a result, they have to start lessons by clearing this away.

The Chair said that she also came in to join an ECT meeting, with the ECT lead, Carol Townsend. There were first and second year ECTs at the meeting and there was an interesting discussion, with the ECT 2s being able tell the ECT 1s what they did when they were first years. All of the trainees said that they feel supported at Cantell and it was interesting to hear their thoughts.

The Chair thanked Governors for coming into school for their Link visits.

<u>Nicola Hunt – English</u>

Nicola reported that she had been in to visit English last Wednesday, and would write up a report.

Nicola had met with Pru and Sarah, the Faculty Leads, who explained that they'd had quite a tough couple of terms in relation to staffing, as there were a few vacancies, which will be filled by April. The new members of staff will have an induction, to help them settle in.

Interventions have been mixed, as Rhys explained earlier, but the English Literature and Language sessions at the weekend were very good and explained to students how to revise. Lorraine Lee had been in for some sessions after school, and was very good and Megan in the Library has receiving funding of £650 for students to buy their own books and a couple of local authors had also been in to speak with students.

Nicola said that she visited the Reading Hub and met with Becky Toland, who gave her a tour of the Reading Hub. Becky had explained that they were using audio books in the Reading Hub, to encourage students to read. They also looked at the Scarborough Reading Rope, that is used in primary schools, which looks at every aspect of a child's

knowledge, such as literacy. Becky works in Thrive four days a week, and during World Book day, she brough her dog in – one of the students who struggles with reading, sat with the dog all day and read really well.

Nicola informed Governors that on her next visit she will do a Learning Walk.

The Chair thanked Governors for their reports, commenting that they didn't necessarily have to do a learning walk on each visit, although it is good to have this information, it is important go get a rounded picture.

The Staff Governor explained that he carries out Learning Walks in his area and goes into lessons as part of the school's normal QA process.

59/26 **Finance and Staffing Committee** **Action**

a) Report of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 11th February 2026

The Chair of the Finance Committee explained that the Committee had looked at a few things during the meeting, including an interesting issue inspired by a question from Emma, about Pupil Premium funding. The School Business Manager provided a breakdown of where the funding goes and what it is spent on, such as teaching, CPD, support and different activities, which was interesting to see.

The Chair asked if there were any concerns. The Chair of the Finance Committee responded no, but it was good to see a breakdown of the costs.

The Committee were also able to look at the plans for the new Thrive extension and he had met with the School Business Manager prior to the meeting, who confirmed that the work would no longer start over Easter, and would likely be next academic year before the building is ready, but the School Business Manager is taking an active lead of the process.

The Committee also looked at the SLA (Service Level Agreements) for next year, and what the school is spending its money on, such as Free School Meals and Insurance, whilst looking at a comparison with the previous year. There were no massive surprises, and although insurance has gone up, benchmarking has taken place.

The School Business Manager provided the Budget Against Actuals, which the Head mentioned earlier, and the Committee were able to see a snapshot in the meeting of where we are, and what the budget is being spent on. At the time of the February meeting, the school should be spending 83% of the budget and both income and spending are broadly inline. The School Business Manager always finds a miracle to make this happen, and the overall view is that we have a matching budget and are in a decent enough shape, with a surplus to carry forward into next year.

The Chair asked about the 3 Year budget. The Chair of the Finance Committee responded that they didn't look at the 3 Year budget this time, as it was presented at the previous meeting.

Signed by Chair: Date: 14th May 2026

The Chair of the Finance Committee informed Governors that the Committee also looked at policies, which are on the agenda today.

b) Report of the Staffing Committee Meeting held on the 11th February 2026

Nicolas Hunt, the Chair of the Staff Committee reported that the Committee had received lots of information on Health & Safety, including a report of some sports equipment that needed some maintenance following an accident – a risk assessment has now been completed and the issue picked up by the School Business Manager.

There were also some accidents where students had slipped on ice outside the school – the School Business contacted the LA to ask for the road to be gritted outside school.

In terms of staff sickness, numbers are down compared to last year and down on the national picture, and for the period September/December, we are down to 2/3 days sickness per employee, although the flu/cold bugs seemed to be earlier this year.

Starters and Leavers is looking very healthy, with posts being filled. We have trainee teachers starting in lots of different subjects. There are still a few vacancies that will be filled very soon, including the English vacancy, which has now been filled. **Action**

There was only one Exit Interview, which was very open and honest, from someone who worked in SEN and was leaving to take up their previous career. They said they valued being able to work at Cantell – it was a very positive Exit Interview.

The Chair of the Staffing Committee said that she had also picked up from Brian Lightman's report, about keeping a watching brief on the SLT and their work loads and looking at the risks of succession planning, which is something the Committee will bear in mind.

The Chair commented that she also keeps an eye on SLT and chats and discusses things with them, so if anything that comes up is really worrying, she will bring it to the Committee. SLT are always out and about and appear to cover their roles.

c) Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee Meetings, 19th November 2025

Governors NOTED the minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee meetings held on the 19th November. 2025.

60/26 **Policies for Approval**

Governors APPROVED the following policies:

- Staff Capability Policy
- Teacher Pay Policy
- Careers Guidance Provider Access Policy

Governors requested some minor amendments to the Library Policy, which the Clerk agreed to action and then circulate the policy to Governors via email for approval. **Clerk**

Governors discussed the use of AI to review policies and possible data breaches, but reassured that only school sanctioned AI applications were used, such as Copilot.

Signed by Chair: Date: 14th May 2026

61/26 **Any Other Business**
There was no other business.

62/26 **Date of Next Meeting**
Thursday 14th May 2026, 5.30 p.m., CTC
That concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting closed at 8.06 p.m.

Page No	Minute Number	Item	By Whom	By When
9	56/26 (45/26)	Staff Handbook – Agenda Item for Staffing Com (Maternity/Paternity leave)	Clerk	20th May Staffing Com Meeting
10	56/26 (45/26)	Policy Spreadsheet – Agenda Item for September WGB meeting	Clerk	September 2026
10	57/26	Harriet and Karen Huelin to talk about the additional work carried out for Year 8.	Clerk/ Agenda	Next meeting – 14/5/26
15	60/26	Amendments to Library Policy – email out to WB for approval.	Clerk	As soon as possible

Signed by Chair: Date: 14th May 2026