



Notes on SIP visit to Cantell School on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022

**Report to Governors**

The programme for my SIP visit consisted of the following:

1. Update with HK
2. Observation of reading ambassadors.
3. Attendance at SLT morning briefing and after school meeting
4. Learning walk focused on teachers in early stages of careers.
5. Focus on learning journeys meeting Faculty Leaders and lesson visits.
6. Focus on careers with Steve Godwin and Andy Paterson and student voice.
7. Meeting with Ian Cresswell on behaviour/attendance

Key points from the day:

- The reading ambassador scheme is a powerful addition to the existing buddy scheme. The before school session was well attended and enables some of the stronger readers to develop their own skills while helping less confident students. Together with the other aspects of the focus on reading across the curriculum the emphasis on developing these essential skills and a love of reading and monitoring progress rightly has a high profile. **I recommended the use of bookmarks to follow text which has been helpful in other schools.**
- The three faculty leaders I met have all developed the use of learning journeys significantly since I first saw them in use. This is work in progress which was already being used very effectively and explicitly referred to in lessons I visited. Whilst consistency of practice is a key aim, departments have the autonomy to develop their learning journeys in the most appropriate format for their subjects. Main developments are that the learning journeys are being made much more interactive with students discussing and annotating them and completing feedback as they are discussed in lessons. Developments such as the use of QR codes in humanities providing links to further reading/research are being trialled. It was evident that this approach which makes the route through the programme of study in each subject very clear is proving very helpful to students who value the support.  
All of this highlights the way the role of faculty leaders has developed over the last couple of years to the current position where they are fully empowered to drive forward, monitor and evaluate their faculty strategy and the work of their teams in a climate of trust and appropriate devolution of responsibility overseen by the SLT. This has led to some extremely high-quality leadership. It was also encouraging to hear how, now that faculty leaders have had the time to get used to the latest GCSE specifications, they have been able to ensure that the teaching and learning in their areas is able to take time to develop strong learning skills alongside the knowledge content. All of this occurs within a climate that recognises that the curriculum will always need to evolve further.

- On my learning walks I also saw how assessments are being developed further to embed formative tasks into the curriculum so that students receive and act upon regular feedback.
- The early careers teachers whose lessons I visited are benefiting from the instructional coaching and the programme of training and support they are receiving through the school's programmes. Now that the school is organising this in house there is much more flexibility to tailor sessions to the needs of individual teachers. In the lessons I visited these teachers were showing increased confidence and skill in managing learning in the classroom. The disruption of their initial training during the pandemic made the need for this all the more important.
- In all of the lessons visited behaviour was, as usual, excellent. In discussing behaviour and seeing the current data the majority of matters which are small in quantity being followed up rigorously by SLT can be described as low level such as talking in a lesson. This enables teachers to conduct their lessons without interruption. Students know exactly what is expected. Attendance continues to be monitored on a daily basis and remains strong.
- The provision for careers education and guidance in the school is very strong indeed with a very wide range of opportunities to develop students' understanding of the many different opportunities available to them and prepare for their next steps when they reach the end of year 11. In the student voice sessions with year 10 and 11 students they were clear about how they value these experiences. They understand their importance and the skills these experiences help them to develop. It was very encouraging to hear how some students have taken the initiative to access their own work experience placements by researching and then directly contacting employers. Some constructive suggestions for further improvements were made which I have reported back to SLT separately. Many of these relate to the overall coordination of careers, CPSED and enrichment programmes. We reviewed the school's progress towards the Gatsby Benchmarks using the COMPASS tool and it is clear that the school is meeting these. This is exceptional and way above averages for schools which, like Cantell are in a careers hub. Nevertheless, it is fully recognised that these benchmarks and the relatively simple evaluation tool used by the Careers and Enterprise Company to assess this are a waypoint in the development of truly outstanding careers provision. Much of what the school provides goes way beyond these basic requirements, for example the extensive and proactive links with the full range of learning providers and colleges and the links with numerous employers.

I am confident that the school meets the requirements of the new Provider Access Legislation. **The relevant session of the website would benefit from a minor update to the current section on the 'Baker Clause' which this new legislation replaces.**

**I recommended that a set of action points for further development is added to the complete Gatsby review and that these are shared with Governors.**

- At the SLT meeting after school progress towards SEF priorities were reviewed with reports from each member of SLT with responsibility for the overview of that area. Momentum is being maintained and driven by highlighting areas that would benefit from further attention or action

**Date of next SIP visit: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

Brian Lightman 23/11/2022