



21st July 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we come to the close of another academic year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we have undertaken together as a school family. Throughout the year, we have witnessed remarkable growth and achievements in our young people, and it fills me with immense pride to see them flourish into the bright and capable individuals they are today.

Our school community, consisting of dedicated staff, talented young people, and supportive families, has once again proven that together, we can create an environment where everyone can thrive and reach their fullest potential. This collective effort has been the driving force behind our success, and I am grateful for the unwavering commitment each family has shown in partnering with us on this remarkable educational journey.

Throughout the year, we have embraced challenges, celebrated triumphs, and navigated through uncertain times with resilience and strength. Our young people have shown incredible adaptability, creativity, and determination in the face of adversity, proving themselves as the leaders of tomorrow. Their passion for learning and their willingness to support and uplift one another have truly exemplified the spirit of our school family.

Here's a roundup of what we have achieved together in this academic year. My apologies for the length of this round-up!

Curriculum

It has been fantastic to see the passion, outstanding work ethic and clear pride the students have in their work as we have visited lessons this year; this has allowed students to make strong progress through our highly ambitious curriculum. With the embedding of learning journeys, students are able to confidently understand and articulate what they are learning, how it connects and builds on previous learning, whilst questioning how it might link to future learning; this has given students ownership, increased their independence, and developed their inquisitiveness and love of learning. As one teacher described in a staff voice, 'The big idea picture really helped students to consider the awe and wonder of the subject.' It has been a real privilege to visit classrooms and see students actively seeking answers, asking thought-provoking questions and exploring new ideas with enthusiasm.

Alongside learning journeys, we continued with our drive to develop our students' knowledge, skills, understanding and vocabulary, through sharing and explaining attack words in every lesson, building oracy skills through discussion and debate, and continual high-quality checking for understanding, underpinned by active listening and engagement. All of these elements of excellent planning, teaching and learning will continue into next year, with a focus on

disciplinary literacy – that is, how students read, write, think, speak, and listen effectively to become experts in each subject area.

We are looking forward to welcoming our students back in September after a well-deserved rest to continue our learning journey with them, empowering them to become expert learners.

Reading

Reading has been and will continue to be a huge focus for us at Cantell. Being able to read fluently and with automaticity is a fundamental building block to leading a happy and successful life now and in the future. Opportunities for reading aloud are exploited in every lesson and in every subject, and will continue to be a focus for next year.

We have celebrated reading at Cantell in many ways - Cantell Book Day, our book fair and our Reading Buddies graduation, to name a few.

Reading Buddies was a huge success again this year. As well as the quantitative data (60% of students improved their reading age by two years or more), there is the feedback – students and teachers have reported that reading for pleasure and independently has increased, students are more confident to read aloud in class and students really enjoyed working with the supportive university students. Some of the feedback from the students has been, "Reading Buddies helped me build confidence when reading aloud" and "I've been more interested in books ever since I started the programme." We would like to thank all of the students for participating, the Reading Ambassadors for being great reading role models, the University of Southampton and all of the university student reading buddies, the Cantell staff who made it possible and for your support.

This summer, why not join the Southampton Libraries free Summer Reading Challenge 2023? 'Ready, Set, Read!' has already launched and runs until **Saturday 2 September 2023**. It is open to ALL children, completely free of charge. Simply visit your [local library](#) to get started.

We also have our very own BIG SUMMER READ 'Bookopoly' challenge running over the summer. All details were included in the most recent library newsletter which is sent to students every fortnight.

As an exciting addition to next academic year, we have 'little libraries' appearing around the school in each faculty area. The aim of these libraries is to make it easier for students to read texts that are chosen specifically for learning in each subject area.

We look forward to another year of reading — 'The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.' (Dr Seuss.)

Empower

EMPOWER continues to be the bedrock of the Character Curriculum with students continuing to hone the skills of: Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, Innovation, Independence, Communication and Entrepreneurship during their Lesson A time, Curriculum time and during their Co-Curricular sessions. It was such a joy to see our students use these skills to overcome their nerves to perform an act of their choosing at the recent Cantell's Got Talent showcase



evening we held this month. As ever, it has been a real pleasure meeting our EMPOWER stars for a celebratory hot chocolate and hearing how they have taken responsibility to develop themselves beyond the academic.

Transition Week

This year we held our 10th Transition week! Transition to secondary school is, and always will be, an important part of a young person's educational career, and for us at Cantell it is important that we make the process as smooth as possible for our young people and their families. This year the 250 students who joined us from schools all over the city took part in a range of activities: students experienced secondary level lessons; enjoyed EMPOWER team building exercises; took part in a whole cohort live zoom with Sonia Zakrzewski from the University of Southampton's archaeology department exploring where a career in science can take you and much more! We ended the week with our graduation ceremony where we welcomed 247 parents through the door to celebrate their child's successful transition. The Class of 2028 were wonderful, and we cannot wait to welcome them back in September.

Homework

Homework, additional learning, study, research and revision outside of the classroom are an integral part of students' learning. We are therefore extremely pleased that homework completion rates for the year stands at around 75%, with the overwhelming majority of students fully committed to extending their learning outside of the classroom. Homework develops positive routines which students can utilise effectively in their journey through Key Stages 3 & 4, College and Further Education, as well as in the world of work. Homework Clubs are available every evening where teachers are on hand to provide support & assistance. Please continue to support your child with the completion of their homework and as always, if there is anything we could do to help or if you have any queries then please feel free to use the homeworkhelpline@cantell.co.uk email address.

Co-Curricular Activities & Trips

During the year our students were able to participate in over 90 extra-curricular clubs & societies covering a range of different interests to allow all our students to take part in an activity they can enjoy. I am so pleased to report that almost 70% of our students regularly took part in at least one club this year, but as ever we would like to see this figure grow year on year. Activities on offer included Aerial Hoop, Code Monkeys, STEM Club, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, as well as an array of Sporting Activities throughout the year. There were some fabulous concerts and productions, including A Midsummer Night's Dream, the Christmas Concert and the jam-packed Summer Concert. The year closed with Cantell's Got Talent and a rewarding Sports Awards ceremony.

Our regular headliners were a roaring success with Year 7 participating in their Outdoor & Adventurous Activities Day where they pitched tents and brewed a cup of tea on a tranger (small gas stove) and then took part in a series of team building games. Our Year 8s took part in their Survival Day to the New Forest, where they navigated around the New Forest, built dens from fallen branches and then cooked marshmallows over an open fire. The Year 9s were treated to an amazing Fine Dining Experience at Figurati in Ocean Village with a two-course meal in opulent surroundings.



The School ran over 120 trips this academic year, that included theatre trips to see The Lion King, Othello, Goldilocks & The Three Bears Christmas Pantomime and The Woman in Black, high end academic lectures including Science Live in Oxford and our regular link with Life Labs at University Hospital Southampton, outward bounds at the Buddens Activity Centre and a host of other trips that aim to enrich our students' cultural capital. We are already planning more trips next year which will include trips to NASA, Gambia and Iceland.

Over the last week students represented their Houses by competing in Rounders, Ultimate Frisbee, Benchball and Dodgeball during their House Activity Days. Students then took part in a Celebration Assembly where their Year Leader presented awards to students nominated by Departments and the House Team handed out their rewards. The days culminated in a reward session where students enjoyed an ice lolly and were able to take part in either watching a film, a sporting activity or having the ability to enjoy the good weather with their friends.

Careers and Next Steps

We are extremely proud of our Careers & Next Steps provision and this year has seen our provision go from strength to strength. In the Spring term the Future Focus & Options Evening allowed Year 9 students and their families to discover what options were available to them and provided an opportunity to discuss future pathways with Cantell staff. The evening was also open to Year 10 and Year 11 students with representatives from a number of colleges & universities, as well as various businesses, training & apprenticeship providers on hand to provide advice and discuss their next steps after they leave Cantell.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Cantell Careers Week, run in conjunction with NatWest Bank, which saw all year groups take part in a series of presentations and workshops delivered by a number of local & national companies which will help them start to think about life after Cantell. This bespoke week is the only one of its kind in the country and we were extremely proud to be able to partner with NatWest to deliver a number of exciting opportunities that included presentations from Fat Face, Trant Engineering, Peter Cooper Group, Highfield Recruitment and Utilita.

The summer term was extremely busy for Year 10 with over 200 students participating in Work Experience Placements. We received some very positive feedback from companies about how our students conducted themselves during the week. The summer term also saw a number of trips to local colleges for our Year 10 students to help them start to think about where they would like to be in September 2024! As in previous years, we will guide, advise and support them through the application process during their final year with us.

We finished the year with our own Cantell Careers Fair in the Sports Hall, where students from all year groups spent time touring the many stands from an array of Colleges, Universities, Apprenticeship & Training providers, as well a number of public and private sector organisations.

House Points

Over 500,000 House points were awarded this year for student's efforts in lessons and as a result of their commitment to their homework. It is pleasing to note that over 180 students have qualified for their Gold House certificate, over 560 students have earned their Silver House



certificate and an incredible 890 students have qualified for their Bronze House certificate, well done. Teachers have recognised students going above and beyond over 6000 times this year by sending home one of our virtual postcards.

Lesson A

This year, students have received Lesson A Expert sessions on various topics including: Our school values and theirs; Holocaust Remembrance; Safer Internet Day; Mental Health Week; Autism Awareness Week. In our assemblies we have talked about Children's Mental Health Week, LGBTQ+ History Month, Anti Bullying Week, Black History Month, and Remembrance. We have enjoyed coming together as a community to reflect on these important topics and consider how we can utilise the lessons learned to strengthen our community and the wider community we live in.

Pastoral Update

It has been another very successful year with behaviour in school better than ever as reported by Ofsted, and borne out by the parent view survey conducted by Ofsted and our own internal surveys of students and quality assurance monitoring. As always, should you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to email the relevant Head of Year and we will resolve these in a timely manner.

I have attached the Parent Guide for September, and would recommend all parents to read this and refamiliarise yourselves with some key information and contacts to help support your child on their next year in their Cantell journey. In particular, I would draw you attention to the uniform and attendance sections.

The uniform section has a few minor changes to the wording of our policy as a result of the extensive parent and student surveys conducted recently. We received over 500 student and 350 parent replies and I thank you for your feedback. The consensus was overwhelmingly to keep the current uniform but to ensure that we are consistent in our enforcement of this policy. We have endeavoured to keep the cost of our uniform as reasonable as we can. Should any families be struggling in this regard, please contact your Head of Year who will be able to discuss how we can support you in September.

With regards to attendance, it is more important than ever that students maximise their attendance to school in 2023-24. The impact of just 5 % absence a year is significant and there is no substitute for being in class in front of our wonderful teaching staff in ensuring that your child makes the most amount of progress possible and reach their true potential.

Safeguarding

We take our duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of our students very seriously. If you are concerned about anyone in our community, please contact our safeguarding team at any time, including during school closures, at: safeguarding@cantell.co.uk



As we look forward to the next academic year, I am filled with excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead. We will continue to build on the strong foundation we have laid, focusing on academic excellence, personal growth, and character development. Together, we will inspire our young people to be critical thinkers, compassionate individuals, and responsible global citizens.

Before we part for the summer break, I encourage each family to take some time to cherish the precious moments spent together, celebrate achievements, and reflect on the lessons learned. The summer break provides a wonderful opportunity for rest, rejuvenation, and exploration, and I trust that our young people will return with renewed energy and enthusiasm for the year ahead.

Behind every successful young person, there is a dedicated team of teachers and support staff working tirelessly to nurture their talents. To our school family of staff, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your dedication, patience, and unwavering belief in the potential of every young person.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all parents and guardians for your continued support, involvement, and trust in our school family. Your partnership has been instrumental in creating a vibrant and enriching learning community, and I look forward to embarking on another incredible academic year together.

Wishing you all a safe, joyful, and relaxing summer break with your loved ones.

We are # Cantell and Proud.

With warmest regards,



Harry Kutty
Headteacher

