



APPENDIX 3

Notes on SIP visit to Cantell School on 7th June 2023

Report to Governors

The programme for my final SIP visit of the school year followed a different format from that of previous visits. After attending the SLT briefing a programme of 'surgery' meetings had been arranged with the leaders of 14 subjects and faculties. These had an open agenda providing an opportunity for staff to discuss and ask for advice on topics of their choice. This worked extremely well and each member of staff arrived with specific questions for us to consider.

These conversations all felt highly positive reflecting the high morale of staff. Without exception everyone I met was enthusiastic about their roles and the state of development of their subject areas. They recognise and value the benefits of working at Cantell and the support they receive from SLT – something that is reflected in the stability of staffing and the strength of recruitment and retention in spite of the well-known national shortages. They are all actively seeking to build on what has been achieved to date. Having completed a great deal of work planning their curricula, many of the discussions focused on next steps, adding enrichment and further depth to what is on offer as well as leadership issues.

I shared detailed feedback with HK but here are some of the general points which emerged during the day.

- **Future vision for development of the school.** Many subject and faculty leaders are considering their contribution to further developing the excellent range of opportunities on offer over forthcoming years and its vision of the kind of person a Cantell student might be after being educated there for 5 years. Perhaps it is the right time for a discussion with all staff about what the next stage of a shared vision might look like. From our conversations it is clear that such a vision would go well beyond the current Ofsted definition of curriculum to something much broader. It would also encompass ways of developing student independence/agency so that they take more active control of their learning. I shared with some subject leaders a definition HMIs made in 1985 which still resonates with many educationalists (see below)
- **Enrichment** was a major theme. Subject leaders want to offer even more opportunities including educational visits , visiting speakers/workshops as well as after school clubs. Several departments also wanted to raise their profile across the school and trust more for example by involving students in performances in assemblies or primary schools or contributing to assemblies about topics related to their subjects. This led to discussions about the logistics of organising such an offer without leading to too much disruption of lessons or cover. Suggestions including incorporating some activity days into the calendar maybe each half term so that various on and off site activities could be organised simultaneously.

- **Trust wide involvement:** Several staff want to build on the links that exist across the trust for example taking students to the primary schools to showcase some of their work. The subject links that exist are highly valued.
- **Leadership development:** some of the staff I met are relatively new to their posts. They (and some others) were aware of their relative inexperience in the leadership of teams of people and were keen to access further CPD in this. This might be particularly down to ensuring that all are aware of what is already on offer (eg Mark's excellent programme) and the role of faculty leaders in brokering CPD but there may also be an need for some more general CPD on these issues for new and spring middle leaders.

It has been another highly successful year for Cantell with much to celebrate. I would like to pass on my congratulations to the staff for everything they are doing and my thanks all those I met for their time. I look forward to continuing to work with the school in the new year.

Dates of 6 SIP visits during new academic year to be confirmed.

Brian Lightman
8th June 2023

HMI The Curriculum for 5-16 DES 1985

A school's curriculum consists of all those activities encouraged within its organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. It includes not only the formal programme of lessons, But also the 'informal' programme of so-called 'extra-curricular' activities as well as those features which produce the schools 'ethos' such as the quality of relationships, the concern for equality of opportunity, the value is exemplified in the way the school sets about its task, And the way in which it is organised and managed.