



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Townhall Report



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Exercise 1

Reflections on the
Vision & Plan

What is meaningful and exciting about the vision & plan?

- The festival map is exciting, the city farm, and renovating greenhouse are exciting (x4 Comments)
- The teachers are really awesome, they work so hard and the majority really care about our kids, touched and heartened
- Happy about the kids being involved in interviewing teachers, and kids being in the outdoor space, happy to hear about the relationships/conversations of how teachers encouraged my daughter to be a prime minister.
- My son is happy and enjoys everyday at school, and always says he has a good day which is a big thing for him
- Aiming to exceed national results targets
- Continuing with the great work you do with child safety and nurturing the individual.
- The segmented Circle graphic - It's useful to see this again!
- Happy that teachers and leadership offered CPD and the residential approach to raise quality and support (x2 comments)



In relation to the festival map and focus days:

How can parents support the creation of the festival map and focus days?

We would like to involve the whole parent body more to support events like this. Our Focus Days are part of our curriculum offer and support elements of our PSHE and RSE curriculum.

When deciding our festival celebration map, we would like to include as many different cultures in our calendar as possible. We will be sharing a poll with parents in our weekly newsletters over the remaining two weeks to gather ideas. We will reflect and refine these each year.



In relation to the festival map and focus days:

How can parents support building community through the festival/focus days?

We want to engage parents proactively in supporting the school. We intend to share the focus day themes in advance, along with opportunities for parent involvement. One example will be the Focus Day on the 07/12/21, where we would like to involve the parent community in a Christmas craft market.



In relation to the festival map and focus days:

Could the festival/focus days be an opportunity to connect to the wider community (beyond parents at the school)?

Yes these days are a great opportunity to do this. However, to plan these properly, and sequence appropriately within the curriculum, leaders need time to create and plan for these experiences.

Once these have been completed, we will approach the whole parent and local community, including sports and business organisations to enrich the opportunities for pupils.



In relation to the festival map and focus days:

How could the focus days be embedded/consciously used to address something which isn't working (in school or the wider world) or celebrate something? A parent gave an example of how we could look at addressing lack of enthusiasm for learning French by having a French culture focus day: Talking to kids in a French speaking country online/ eating French food etc.

The intention is to look at these pressing global themes through the Focus Day agenda, we also speak to the pupils councils to get their views. For example this year we have looked at Black Lives Matter and world food poverty because at the time of delivery these were prominent global issues – we recognise that they still are. Our intention is to expand on these themes and look to support more localized school based issues where they become apparent.



In relation to the wellbeing and character formation:

How might one of the Purposes of Town Hall (To encourage each person to be their best through nurturing conversations and love) translate within the school for our children?

As a school we are working to develop that ethos amongst our whole community. That starts with our staff fully embedding the philosophy behind the Avanti Way in their conversations with each other, parents and pupils. This is also now part of our recruitment process and is a key focus in our school development plan moving into the next academic year.

We have started to update our behaviour framework to support the language we use in communication that we want to nurture within our community.



In relation to the wellbeing and character formation:

How might the policy, practice and culture at school explore a relational approach, and a practical joined up approach, so that it encourages people to be their best through nurturing conversations and love, rather than a simple, punitive approach?

Our behaviour framework is being developed to ensure that restorative approaches are embedded across all phases. As a school we have high expectations of behaviour in lessons. Prior to September, all external reviews showed that behaviour across the school was poor and this needed addressing as a matter of urgency. External reviews now indicate that the school is calm and that on the whole, pupils are respectful of each other. Work needs to continue to develop positive learning behaviours, which are different to general behaviour and attitudes.

In the rare instances where an individual interrupts the learning opportunities for others, we will take action to make sure that we maintain 'disruption free' learning environments. Where this involves a pupil with SEN, the leadership team will ensure that the provision has been inclusive and work with teachers to develop their practice to support the needs of all learners.



In relation to the wellbeing and character formation:

What happened to the behaviour policy work? We recall a commitment that the behavior policy would be a relational, trauma informed one, and that Billy Lee was visiting other schools to learn from them and create a plan. Was it dropped, and if so, why?

Work on behaviour is always ongoing. The previous work was not scrapped, but the priority was on establishing expectations that allowed learners to learn and feel safe, before we are able to develop other elements of the school to support the holistic journey of our educational philosophy.

We are currently looking to amend the framework, with collaboration from other Avanti Schools, and a researched based approach to supporting positive behaviours. Once this has been agreed through our school and regional leadership, this will be shared with parents.



In relation to the wellbeing and character formation:

What will happen to prioritise wellbeing?

- a. More detail about the nitty gritty when it's know would be useful.

Wellbeing is a school priotiy, but there are many elements that go into supporting this for pupils and staff. This year has been problematic because of the frequent changes to policy for assessment, lockdowns and guidance for young people in school. Next year, we have adjusted the school day to incorporate times to support wellbeing. We also believe that encouraging all pupils to be doing Yoga, Forest School and mindfulness is important, but just doing these is not enough, staff and pupils need to be trained to get the best out of this provision.

Young people also need a clear roadmap into their final assessment, particularly for Year 11. Part of our wellbeing support for these pupils is how we are delivering the curriculum to ensure that they are ready for the end of key stage 4 experience.



In relation to the wellbeing and character formation:

We are hearing from children instances of teachers saying things which do not embody this so it would be good to hear what training teachers might get to help with this.

Where any instance of this has been brought to the attention of the school leadership, it has been dealt with straight away. As clarity around how the Avanti Way will embed into our vision for Avanti Hall School, school staff are receiving more in-depth training around the vision that we would like all of our community to feel confident and secure in.



In relation to Forest School/Outdoor learning/greenhouses:

How will children experience a nature connected forest school, with forest school crafts skills etc (rather than hot chocolate and phonics round the fire)?

The concept of Forest School and the ethos of why it is important is not to have phonics outside. It should be child led and focus on the core skills that give children of all ages the opportunities to build their own confidence and skills. There will be links to the curriculum, and the facilitators may link to these if and when they arise. Learning and education is all around us, and the Forest School will give opportunities for young people to establish these connections.



In relation to CPD

1. What does our teachers CPD focus upon (ie is it just academic efficiency or will it include SEND, well being, mentoring, reflective practice, secondment, etc)?

Teacher CPD is not just about one thing. Our CPD focuses on pastoral, safeguarding, SEN, wellbeing, curriculum development and pedagogy. Some of this is delivered internally, by our staff, some throughout the Trust, and other parts are sourced externally, often with accreditation. For example, every member of staff has had specific training from the NSPCC to support SEN support and safeguarding.

Example of external training providers are (this is just examples of some of the current providers):

ASCL – Association of School and College Leaders

NSPCC

Educare

The Outdoors Group

The Chartered College of Teaching

Babcock LPD

Rights Respecting Schools

Ambition Institute



In relation to more choice at KS4

How will this happen (is there enough space?)

As the school grows in terms of pupil numbers, it creates more opportunities for choice at GCSE level, as more teachers will be needed, and this create more opportunities for choice. We have already seen this year with the addition of another option pathway for GCSE and we will continuously look at other pathways. We do not want to be the size of other local secondaries, and one impact of this is the limitation of the size of the option choices.

Can the school offer more/different subjects (vocational pathways?) by a collaborating with Bicton or other schools?

This is a possibility. Behind the scenes we have been developing our careers programme which has created stronger links with Post 16 providers. We are exploring key stage 4 options, particularly within outdoor learning, but again, this can take time to establish our school's status to be an accredited center.



In relation to Communication;

Part a - Might we come together in person meeting at the school? We value the eye to eye contact and in-person communication.

Part b - How can we have events linking the top management with parents to feel less distant? Might we meet regularly face to face or have a parent coffee morning once a month where management team can meet with parents, learn about skills and experiences the parents have to offer, more regular meaningful face to face contact? (2 comments)

In our development plan we have addressed this. It is our intention to have an afternoon of meet the class teacher or tutor early in the autumn term, depending on the phase of school.

We would like more people to be involved with our PTFA and support events, but also welcome people into school. Each half term we will be holding coffee mornings, one for primary parents and one for secondary. Dates will be shared at the beginning of the autumn term. These will be attended by the leadership team.



In relation to Communication;

What is the plan for having conversations and giving regular feedback and alternative forums to give input?

We would like to expand how we communicate and connect with parents and we hope that by expanding some of the offers listed above, we can create a better dialogue where we can answer more questions and share where we are expanding our school provision.



In relation to Communication;

Can we receive more information about how kids are being excited, and inspired to go to school?

When restrictions lift, and more opportunities are available, we hope to share more opportunities for elements of school that will further enrich pupils. This includes trips, performances, sports and enjoyment in their curriculum.

What is the plan for having conversations and giving regular feedback and alternative forums to give input?

We would like to expand how we communicate and connect with parents and we hope that by expanding some of the offers listed in previous slides. We hope to create a better dialogue where we can answer more questions and share where we are expanding our school provision.



In relation to Communication;

Is it possible to reinstate communication directly between parents and classroom teacher?

It was not our intention to take this away. We established check-ins throughout the year and we want our class teachers and tutors to be your first contact if anything is needed.

Is it possible to have a weekly email that gives connection with the child's week, the themes and challenges, what was met with curiosity?

I am very mindful of teacher workload and how best to share this information for parents. Our weekly newsletters do go along way to sharing school activities, but some year groups are better represented than others.



In relation to supporting teachers:

How can we support and appreciate our teacher more? Both by parents and by management. They appear to be stressed out - and we wonder if having a wellbeing weekend for the staff/teachers could help - and get input on how to do it.

This would help greatly, but there are many practicalities that would need to be explored. As leadership, we are working hard to support and establish a working environment that allows for teachers to have time to do the essentials, but also to feel empowered to be creative. The last 18 months has been the most challenging that I have known in education, and most areas of life. The demands on the profession have been unprecedented, and whilst we have tried to support colleagues, and the leadership team, the workload for teachers has been greater this year across all key stages. We are grateful and reinforce to staff as often as we can.

Your comments that get shared through the 'thank a member of staff' form go along way to helping teachers and support staff feel valued for the hard work they do.

How can we collectively support children to love the teachers and have relationships with them?

I have not met a teacher in the school who does not genuinely care for their classes and how to support them. Reinforcing this would help the relationship develop.



In relation to Academic focus:

How can we be not as concerned about the academic rigor? all we care about is our kids wanting to go to school and being inspired, that they want to learn in a rich learning environment, we trust that the management is doing what they need to do but keeping the kids at the center of it. Looking for acknowledgement on that.

At no stage have the children not been at the centre of our choices. At the end of a child's journey at our school they are entitled to move to the next part of their education knowing that they can chose the course to study that inspires them. This means engaging in a wide curriculum, but also taking advantage of the other things we offer as a school.



In relation to Behaviour framework:

The new behaviour framework. I have been impressed with the way the school handles behavioral issues, and would hope for incremental improvement rather than wholesale changes in this area.

Our intention is to keep our high expectations. Our work will focus on the restorative nature of improving relationships and respect for each other. We want staff and pupils to use language that mirrors our values and supports the journey of improvement with a clear understanding of expectations.





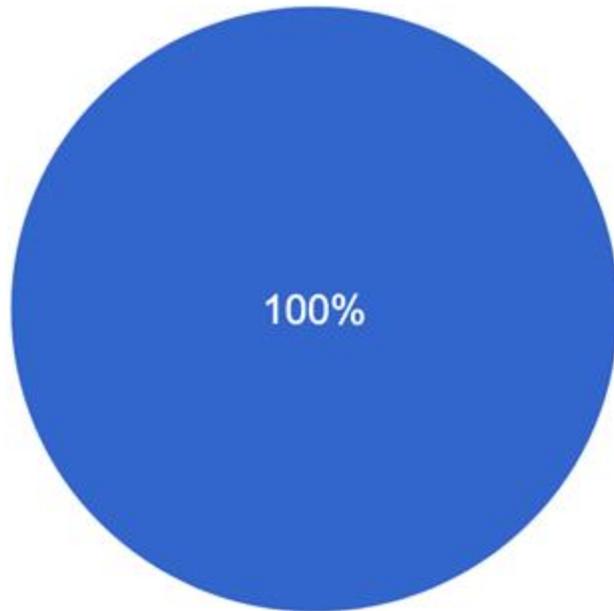
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Feedback & Next Steps

Feedback received

I would join another Townhall with a similar structure

2 responses



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree



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