

South West Hub Governance Board (SWH 06)

Meeting Minutes

Monday 29 June 2020

11.00 am-13.05pm, Virtual

Chair: Dr Molly Warrington (MW)

Clerk: Beth Souster (BS)

In attendance: Andrew Quayle (AQ), Stephen Howe (SH), Carolyn Dickinson (CD), Mike Ion (MI), Nitesh Gor (NG), Bhavini Budhdev (BB), Mike Younger (MY), Salina Ventress (SV), Suzanne Flack (SF) and Jo Evans (JE).

ACTIONS

REF	Action	Lead
SHB06-A1	Present the transfer grant expenditure to the SW Hub Board meeting in September.	MI
SHB06-A2	To consider a proposal for the SW Hub Board members on potential areas of responsibility and the frequency of checks relating to the DP priorities and to present a proposal at the next meeting.	MI & CD
SHB06-A3	To advise stakeholders on the changes to the school term dates and school timings.	MI

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies

(Ch.)

MW welcomed attendees to the meeting and gave a special welcome to the new SW Hub Board members Jo Evans and Salina Ventress.

Rachel Howe, observer, was unable to attend.

Salina and Jo introduced themselves and gave a brief over view of their experience.

No apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest(s)

(ALL)

a. Conflict of Interests

- i. None declared for this meeting. If any changes arise, they are to be sent to BS.
- ii. New members are to send their completed details to BS.

b. Business Interests

- i. As above.



3. Minutes & Confidential Minutes of meeting 18 May 2020 to be approved/signed* (Ch.)

The SW Hub Board agreed, the minutes and the confidential minutes from the meeting on 18 May 2020. They are a true and accurate record of the contents discussed at the meeting. The minutes were therefore approved and will be signed by the Chair once social distancing measures are lifted.

4. Matters arising (Ch.)

Regarding action SHB05-A4

MI – Updated the SW Hub Board Members on the relevant incident (pre-dating the taking over of the former Steiner schools by Avanti) and the legal requirement to action the resulting court orders. Two of these orders require training for SW Hub Board Members to include:

- Disability awareness training
- Understanding the duties of Trustees in relation to SEND
They will be all day training sessions (9:30 – 4pm approx.) and attendance will be required, however virtual attendance could be considered.
The suggested dates are:
- 23 Sept - Bristol
- 30 September - Exeter

The four actions from the previous minutes have all been actioned.

There were no matters arising from the confidential minutes.

5. AST matters: items from Board of Trustees (MW)
No matters to report.

6. Financial report* (BB)

BB detailed her finance review report. Each school was addressed individually.

Avanti Hall

Q – Do local authorities require different information for SEND funding, reporting and expenditure?

A – Yes, this is correct. Devon is different and their funding and reporting is different to other LAs.

It was noted that the over spend in SEND is due to the high number of 1 to 1 support, for a number of pupils at the school.

Avanti Park

Q – Is the shuttle bus service essentially a taxi from school to home?

A – It all depends on the school. There is a charge to use this service. The funds that are currently available have been allocated to two new mini buses.

Avanti Gardens

MI – Advised SW Hub Board Members that discussions were taking place with the Department to discuss the new local free school using part of the site, and this has potential to increase income for the school.

Q – How is Avanti planning their budgets for next year without impacting on the pupils?

A – The budgets have been completed for the academic year 20/21 and they will be presented at the next SW Hub meeting in September. Sustainability will come in the next 4-5 years. BB detailed the plans for the budgets and for accessing funding over the next few years.

Q – Can you confirm details on the deficit of £1.5 million?

A – The funding is currently coming from the DfE.

SH noted that the current Terms of Reference do not require the SW Hub Board to have financial scrutiny on the budgets but believes this should be part of their remit.

Q – 1: What has been received for school improvement across the schools and is this at Trust or school level?

2: Can claims be made under losses due to the Covid crisis?

A – The transfer grant has been received by the Trust and the allocations will be shared at the next SW Hub Board meeting.

ACTION – MI to present the transfer grant expenditure at the SW Hub Board meeting in September.

NG advised the SW Hub Board that the levels of funding could change moving forward and suggested a cover sheet for budget allocations would be useful in the financial overview.

MW – Thanked BB for her presentation and noted that it is a key issue for the SW Hub Board.

MI – Thanked BB for her hard work and for the outstanding job she is doing.

7. Curriculum Review:

Update on implementation of new curriculum

(CD)

CD detailed her report.

Current pupil numbers:

Avanti Hall – 330

Avanti Park – 405

Avanti Gardens – 202

Planning for the autumn term is proving difficult due to staffing uncertainty. Parents are holding back on confirming their children's return until they know who will be teaching in September.



Q - Do we have an understanding on the parents' perspective and why they are resistant?

A – There is some parental dissatisfaction and they hope there will be more Steiner focused teachers in the classrooms.

It was suggested that changes made since the Trust took over the school should be recorded, showing 'before and after' scenarios, to show parents how schools were improving.

Q - The SW Hub Board have previously commented on the curriculum, but could more detail be given on the principles of the curriculum that are not being explored?

A – There are a few areas that are proving difficult, such as Primary ICT and Design Technology in the craft curriculum. There is also a lack of physical resources and the outdoor areas also have an impact on delivering the curriculum.

Q – Throughout the curriculum change, at a more local level, have relationships been established with feeder schools?

A – Yes connections have been made with local people. The challenge is having a worthy site suitable for perspective parents to visit.

Update on staffing restructure* (Confidential Section) (MI)

8. Hub Development Plan (DP) Update* (MI)

MI referred to the Hub DP and noted that the document is no longer draft.

Q – How can the SW Hub Board be assured that the RAG ratings are accurate?

A – They are currently internal judgements. It would be useful to consider the possibility of a SW Hub Board member taking an area each to address.

Q – What represents the highest risk and how do you anticipate moving this?

A – 1: Safeguarding - Progress has been made in this area but it is always on-going.
2: SEND – The key here is to helping people understand that the schools are not alternative providers, they are mainstream provider schools.

CD – Advised SW Hub Members that a key focus area is improving behaviour.

Attendance is also an issue and is currently extremely low at around 30% across all three schools.

Q – Looking at the different priorities how frequently and who on this board will take responsibility?

A – MI and CD will consider a proposal for the next meeting.

ACTION – MI and CD to consider a proposal for the SW Hub Board members on potential areas of responsibility and the frequency of checks relating to the DP priorities and to present a proposal at the next meeting.

9. Hub Director's Report*

(CD)

CD delivered a brief overview of the report.

Confidential Section.

Q – Are you satisfied with the GCSE data submitted and is this information as accurate as possible?

A – Yes, 26 pupils from Avanti Hall and 22 pupils from Avanti Park have had their data submitted. There was a process of moderation over the grades, however there is likely to be challenge from some of the parents. The grades have been presented with integrity. Some of the KS2 data was lacking in a number of areas and there was also some unknown.

Q – Can you please update us on the marketing videos for the 3 schools?

A – 3 Video tours of the school have been prepared and a short clip was shared to promote the schools to prospective parents. These clips can be seen on YouTube.

Safeguarding policy approval

CD – Advised that the NSPCC had audited Avanti Hall's safeguarding policy and it met the audit recommendations. Therefore Avanti Park and Gardens were brought in line.

SV – Requested that Section 8 is updated to replace the terminology that 'staff should' to 'staff must' and introduce the word 'immediately'.

MY – Advised that he had sent his comments to MI about the roles and responsibilities of the trustees and has suggested some amendments.

DECISION – The 3 policies were approved in principle on the understanding that the requested changes were amended before they were finalised and put in the public domain. It was also requested that the policies are tidied up and put in the Avanti Trust format and this will be actioned.

10. Outcome of consultations*

(MI)

MI detailed his presented report on consultations regarding school dates and changes to the school day.

MI asked the SW Hub Board members if they would approve the changes.

DECISION – The SW Hub Board members approved and accepted the suggested changes to the proposed school term dates and timings.

Q – Does the Avanti Trust have a policy on flexible schooling? If not, it might be useful to implement one especially at Hub level.

A – There isn't currently an Avanti policy, the default situation is that students are in full time.

SF – Advised that a flexible learning statement would be advised here as the responsibility rests with the school when the children are not on site.

ACTION – MI to advise stakeholders on the changes to the school term dates and school timings.

11. Review of Terms of Reference*

(Ch.)

SH - Detailed suggestions to update the SW Hub Board terms of reference and there are three key areas to consider:

1. Hub focused, as opposed to individual school focused.
2. Evaluation of effectiveness.
3. School finances.

Currently the SW Hub Board are presented with financial information but don't have the ability to make recommendations.

MW – Advised that due to the number of AST Trustees sitting on the SW Hub Board, there is now enough for a committee to be established of the Trust Board. MW will suggest this to the Trust Board to increase the local powers of governance such as finance.

The SW Hub Board discussed the terms of reference and the best way forward, including the length of time the Board will remain in existence before moving to School Stakeholder Committees, as in other Avanti schools. It was agreed that Principals could be asked to form parent forums during the next academic year as part of the transition process.

SF – Advised that the budget setting should be at school level, budget comments and approval should be at Hub level.

MW invited comment from the executive team:

NG – Agreed that the budget setting responsibility should sit with the school, with input from finance. This should then be shared with the SE Hub Board.

MI – The SW Hub could be more involved with the allocations of the transfer grant.

It was noted that financial scrutiny is important and the requirement to see how funds are being spent is top level.

It was suggested that the 3 school's principals should attend the SW Hub Board meetings. This was discussed and it was agreed that the principals would attend for certain agenda items such as the finance item, this will help them see the bigger picture.

SW Hub members discussed the importance of having continuity of members of the Hub.

12. Identification of confidential item(s)

(All)

Update in staffing restructure (Item 7)



Q in the Hub Directors report (Item 9)

13. Any Other Business (All)

MI suggested linking a SW Hub Board member with a particular school to be a link with the principals, to visit the school sites and to meet staff and pupils etc.

This was agreed as a good idea and will be considered.

14. Overview of Actions (Ch. /CI)

The 3 actions were confirmed.

15. Date of next meeting(s): (Ch.)

Academic year 2020/21 (confirmed):

Monday 28th September 2020

Monday 30th November 2020

Monday 25th January 2021

Monday 29th March 2021

Monday 24th May 2021

Monday 5th July 2021

15. Meeting Closed

MW thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

Meeting concluded: 13:05

* Papers attached