



## Curriculum Review for Avanti Schools Trust: Designing a principled curriculum for the 21st century

### Response of the Avanti Board to the recommendations of the Curriculum Review:

Recommendations and Board Responses
<p>1.1: Adopting a new curriculum model – the report recommends 9 domains of learning: Nature and the Environment; Arts, Music and Crafts; English; Languages; Mathematics; Physical Development and Movement; Science and Technology; Place and Time, and Philosophy, Faith and Belief</p> <p><b>Board Response:</b> Accept with the following amendments: English and Languages; Mathematics; Place and Time; Arts, Music and Crafts; Physical development and movement; Philosophy, faith and belief (including PHSE); Nature and the environment, science and technology</p>
<p>1.2: Core and Local Curriculum. We recommend a curriculum that has a broadly 90% core offer and 10% localised offer.</p> <p><b>Board Response:</b> Accept: 10% localised offer to include the teaching of craft and an allocation of time each term to the celebration of key festivals, and to enable other aspects of the curriculum to be contextualised locally.</p>
<p>1.3: Detailed curriculum mapping should be developed for all subject areas that identify progress indicators.</p> <p><b>Board Response:</b> Accept: For some curriculum areas (handcraft, landcraft and woodcraft) this mapping exercise will need to be completed before the end of the summer term 2020.</p>
<p>1.4: Subject-specific professionals working alongside teachers in schools will support the curriculum mapping and progress mapping needed.</p> <p>1.5: Subjects should be regarded as equally important. A balanced curriculum is a requirement as indicated by Ofsted and the DfE. As well as this, importantly, the use of outdoor learning is a key aspect of the new curriculum intention which may include gardening, forest school, cooking, understanding the rhythm of nature. Especially in Primary School, however, core subjects of English, Maths and Science are key to opening pathways to all areas of learning.</p> <p>1.6: Develop Reading for Pleasure cultures from Reception and throughout the schools that balance the skill and will of learning to read.</p> <p>1.6.1: This should include well taught phonics lessons as part of a rich reading culture, linked with whole-to-part theories of learning. For example, phonics can be taught within high-quality texts (e.g. Storytime Phonics) as well as supporting children with specific learning needs within focused small group phonics sessions.</p> <p>1.6.2: Develop English leadership within the schools (suggested professional development could be from CLPE).</p> <p><b>Board Response:</b> accept 1.4 – 1.6.2 without amendment.</p>
<p>1.6.3: Use CLPE key core texts, planning and assessment documents.</p> <p><b>Board Response:</b> Accept, with the proviso that schools will be able also to make use of core texts from a variety of sources and programmes</p>

1.6.4: A curriculum map of key stories should be created using stories that demonstrate the values of Avanti schools and which draw from all faith traditions and also secular stories. This could then ensure a 'core offer' of texts and stories for all children and demonstrate progression.

1.7: Develop a mastery approach to the teaching and learning of maths.

1.7.1: Develop coherent detailed curriculum planning to map progression of knowledge and skills.

1.7.2: Develop maths leadership within the school.

1.7.3: Consider adopting a maths programme to support teachers' planning and assessment (alongside high-quality professional development); for example, Maths No Problem.

**Board Response:** accept 1.6.4 – 1.7.3 without amendment

1.8: Build on the strengths of Steiner kindergarten practice so that every child has the best start to education. This should include opportunities for nurturing a sense of 'feeling, doing and thinking' – these could be described as experiential learning, activity, reflexivity and metacognition. Connection with the natural world is highly valued in all the schools' communities; awareness of self in nature as key aspects of the curriculum.

**Board Response:** Accept: We will recommend a series of visits to other schools, including Steiner schools, where the early years provision is deemed to be outstanding.

1.9: Technology should not be overused. It was evident in our discussions that there was strong feeling about the use of technology – and in particular the overuse of technology.

**Board Response:** Accept (1.9.1 and 1.9.2); Reject: 1.9.3 – all the SW schools already have wireless access, as do all other Avanti schools.

1.10: Develop a Festival Curriculum Map that represents the diversities of traditions. We found this aspect to be significant in each community, and we advise that this is rolled out across all Avanti schools. We suggest that these relate to the rhythm of nature and seasons. This will help children understand the natural world and encourage awe, wonder and reverence.

**Board Response:** Accept

1.11: Spiritual insight: Recognising that these are not faith schools, and also aware that parents and teachers said that they value education that attends to mind, body and soul, we recommend that meditation, yoga and other mindful practices be developed in a systematic and progressive way.

**Board Response:** Accept

1.12: Depth of learning and Main Lesson: parents who were familiar with Steiner education advocated the Main Lesson as a key feature of the structure of the school day and learning experience. The new curriculum model, National Curriculum and Ofsted framework for school inspections advocates depth and breadth of learning. We suggest that two in-depth sessions be planned each week (for 1.5 hours each session) which will give opportunities for children to bring subject skills and knowledge together.

1.12.1: As such, we recommend that a 'mastery' approach be adopted across the curriculum so that knowledge and skills are learnt with evidence of progress, rather than 'rushing through' subject content.

**Board Response:** Accept

1.12.2: We also suggest that 'Activation Weeks' be developed to give opportunities for cross-curricular learning. These could bring together sequences of learning in several subject areas and require more in-depth opportunities for creativity, imaginative play and cross-curricular application of learning.

**Board Response:** Accept in part: We will plan for at least 4 focus days per year to align with the festival calendar.

1.12.3: Depth of learning can be achieved in other practical and operational ways even without the Main Lesson model. However, we believe that school Principals, guided by the Avanti Schools' Education team, are best placed to decide how the structure of the school day is

designed. The principle is one advocating depth of learning (see Appendix 9 for suggested timetable in Primary School).

**Board Response:** We will carry out a consultation exercise with the school communities on proposed new timings for the school day.

2.1: Develop a professional development strategy.

2.2: Develop a communication strategy. We note that before these recommendations can be implemented, the schools will need to focus on safeguarding practices and raising standards in core subjects quickly in order to instigate school cultural change. This is a key recommendation by Ofsted and a requirement for Avanti Schools Trust to affect rapid change. This will ensure that all members of the community have clarity about expectations and can become part of the solution.

2.2.1: We strongly recommend that a clear strategic communication strategy is developed so that parents understand the vision, process of growth and curriculum development plans of the schools.

2.2.2: Provide opportunities to develop the curriculum by accessing the richness of each specific school community (e.g. parent skills, parent support, local expertise, local cultural links e.g. seaside, museums).

2.3: Statutory requirements should be adhered to (e.g. the new Relationships Education curriculum September 2020). While some parents believed their school should be exempt from National assessments, these are statutory and part of current funding agreements between the EFSA and Avanti Schools Trust.

**Board Response:** Accept 2.1 – 2.3 without amendment.

3.1: Develop a principled assessment policy

3.2: Develop the use of formative assessment as an integral part of high-quality teaching.

4.1: All children should have access to the broad curriculum and research should influence decision making (including Maximising the Practice and Impact of Teaching Assistants; SEND Code of Practice; Report from Cross Party Committee regarding SEND provision; Creating Learning without Limits).

4.1.2: High-quality first teaching needs to underlie children's experiences.

4.1.3: Professional development is needed to support teachers in understanding specific learning needs (e.g. Dyslexia, Autism).

4.1.4: Systems to document SEND and provision would support teachers and teaching assistants in planning and broadening the curriculum for children with specific needs.

4.2.1: Relationship making and behaviour is part of the curriculum design because it nurtures the culture in which children and educators learn and work. Positive appropriate relationships are vital for building positive behaviours and attitudes to learning. Overtly punitive behaviour management systems, including isolation and detention as a common approach, should be avoided in our view because they are inconsistent with the values-led relationship approach that parents desire, and that is fundamentally important to the vision of Avanti Schools Trust.

4.2.2: We advocate a consistent values-led behaviour approach. An approach based on Non-Violent Communication (see link) is good for all children, but a more specific therapeutic strategy that provides awareness of trauma, psychology and child behaviours (see link) is effective for children with specific and complex learning and behavioural needs.

4.2.3: We recommend that a full review of behaviour management be conducted, with clear policy and professional development opportunities, to realign high-quality behaviour with the vision of the curriculum. We suggest that this aligns with the values and desire for positive relationships in schools.

**Board Response:** Accept 3.1 – 4.2.3 without amendment.

4.2.4: There are benefits and limitations for children having the same teacher throughout the educational experience. However, we recommend that consideration be given to teachers having the same class for 2 or 3 years (e.g. children starting in Year 1 have the same teacher in Year 2; then same teacher in Year 3 to 4). Principals are best placed to deploy their staff.

**Board Response:** Accept, noting that deployment of staff by each Principal will need to remain flexible, particularly in the primary phase. In KS 3 and KS 4 the default will be to deploy subject teachers to the same group for at least two years wherever possible.

4.2.5: We recommend the adoption of the new PSHE Avanti curriculum, which attends to values and whole-person education. This is a strong and unique aspect of the Avanti offer.

4.2.6: We recommend that staff professional codes of conduct be developed, rooted in the values of Avanti Schools Trust, so that there is clarity and confidence in the way that all educators engage with children. This consistency will engender trust in the children and parent communities.

**Board Response:** Accept 4.2.5 – 4.2.6 without amendment.