

**MINUTES OF THE 147th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
TUESDAY 5 JULY 2022 AT 17.30
Meeting Held remotely on TEAMS**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Patricia Edmondson (PED), Kevin Chamberlain (KC), Cristina Carli Nonnato (CCN), Michael Collins (MCO) Joshua Hetherington (JHE) Josephine Hughes (JH) Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS) Tom Chmielewski (TC)

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 17:30

1. Apologies

DW welcomed the on-line presence of the members of the Executive Board, who had joined the virtual meeting via TEAMS. Apologies for absences came from Rachel Brannagan (RB), Tony Bothwell (TB) and Stewart Harris (SH)

2. Declarations

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of Last meeting

Referring to the previous minutes, DW referred specifically to page two and the comment about some local secondary schools who have reduced their targeted pupil actual numbers (PAN). DMI explained to the Board that parental preference means that the more successful schools in the local authority are oversubscribed while others are undersubscribed. As a result, some schools have taken the decision to reduce their PAN.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 27 April 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

5. Principal's Report

DMI shared his report with the Board.

DMI greeted the Board and informed them that MCO would be presenting the revisions to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (KCSiE) which have been included in the Academy's Safeguarding Policy for September 2022. its safeguarding processes for the next academic year.

The second presentation would be from JHE who would talk about UCAS and the Academy's internal UCAS process for our current Year 12 students.

DMI told the Board that the exam period was a lot longer this year in order to accommodate any potential COVID-related issues. DMI explained that each subject paper was separated by 10 days so that if a child were to contract COVID, and were to isolate, there would be enough time for the student to recover in order to sit the second paper. If they missed one paper they would be able to sit the second paper and the overall mark would be derived from that one paper. DMI told the Board that the Academy's exam period had gone very well and that all students had sat their papers for GCSE and A-Level. DMI was delighted to say that the students had conducted themselves

superbly - they had approached exam with maturity and determination, and they had worked very hard in preparing for each exam. The support that the students had received from the staff was also excellent. DW asked for the Board's appreciation of this strong commitment by teachers to be passed on.

DMI informed the Board about the International Baccalaureate (IB) results which had been received that afternoon, and was pleased to say that they were the best IB results students had achieved at the Academy. The maximum total points allocation for IB is 45. Two students secured places at Oxford and one student may attend Cambridge, subject to a remark. There are 29 IB papers that could be remarked and the hope is that a number of the students will receive a higher point score after these remarks. DMI told the Board that he would keep them posted with how that progresses.

The Academy has welcomed two Ukrainian students in Year 7 and Year 10 and they have settled in well considering the circumstances of their move to the UK. There are also two Ukrainian students who will join the Academy in Year 12 in September.

Exclusions

DMI explained that there has been an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions at the Academy. A pattern has emerged across schools in England that students are becoming more interested in "vapes" and that these are promoted on TikTok and easily purchased because age checks are few and far between. While issue of vapes is not as seriously affecting the Academy as it is in other schools, it does exist. Our approach is to treat vapes as banned items and exclude any student who is observed vaping outside the Academy, or who has a vape in his or her possession in the Academy- and to meet with parents. The Academy has delivered hard-hitting assemblies to each year group in order to pro-actively deter students from vaping and therefore avoid serious sanctions. Regular checks will be conducted with all year groups.

The Academy has noticed an increase in some younger students who have been caught shoplifting from some of the local shops. The Academy has developed good relationships with each of the shopkeepers who are situated close to The Academy and we are working closely with these shops to prevent reoccurrence and to discipline the students accordingly regardless of whether police were involved or not.

Attendance

DMI was pleased to inform the Board about the attendance figures for the Academy, 50% of the Academy's students have achieved 100% for the Year and the Academy is well above the national average. This says a huge amount about the Academy's ethos and the expectation around attendance.

Staffing

DMI told the Board that each year becomes increasingly difficult to attract and recruit good members of staff but this year the Academy has been successful in doing so and he is confident that he has a good team in place for September.

DMI shared a graph which showed a decline in the number of PGCE teacher-training places being filled and the subject areas most affected. DW commented that better understanding is needed nationally as to why people are not taking up teacher training and he would "push this issue" in other forums that he has links with.

Strategic plan

DMI asked the Board if they had any comments on the review of the strategic plan and the developments that have taken place over the last year.

Accident Report

DMI shared the accident report with the Board and asked if there were any comments, of which there were none.

6. Current Topic for discussion

i. Safeguarding policy updates (MCO)

MCO shared with the Board a presentation about the safeguarding updates for the next academic year.

MCO shared the government's KCSiE document with the Board and summarised the updates that have been made to the Academy's Safeguarding Policy to reflect the changes to KCSiE. MCO also explained the improvements that he has made to the Academy routines and internal processes around safeguarding.

A low-level concerns policy is now in place in the Academy, and training will also be given to staff on how to report a low-level concern.

The Academy's approach to safeguarding is observing, reporting and picking up concerns over student welfare - on anything that might be a safeguarding concern and taking appropriate actions when they are recorded.

The Academy has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse and a holistic approach to mental, social, emotional physical, medical and academic welfare at the heart of all of its policies.

The Academy will continue to run the student forum each term. The forums are a good way for the Academy to listen to students, including any safeguarding concerns, and use their voice in further improving its routines and practices. The forums will be led by Miss Petersen (Assistant Principal and Deputy DSL).

MCO informed the Board of the changes to the Safeguarding Team and shared the details of new team and their roles for next year. Safeguarding is every single person's responsibility in the Academy.

MCO talked about the Academy's safeguarding training and how the Academy makes sure that the staff understand their statutory safeguarding duties and requirements, but also how the Academy continue to monitor staff to make sure that their development and their training is an ongoing process.

All new staff will receive appropriate safeguarding training.

DMI asked the Board if they had any questions and there were none.

DW told the Board that he feels the monitoring of social media online, which was mentioned in the presentation, is very good.

ii. 6th Form progression (JHE)

JHE presented to the Board with an update to the Sixth Form and, in particular, student progression.

Over the last 10 years, the Academy has seen the proportion of students who are going on to study at the most highly regarded, (Russell Group) universities - and hence most competitive for entry- increase significantly.

From the period of 2011 to 2014, the percentage of students who secured places at a Russell Group university rose from 15% to 33%. From 2016 to 2019, this increased to an average of around 50% of the students, and in the last two years this has risen further to the mid-60% in terms of the percentage.

JHE confirmed that 120 of the Academy's 125 Year 13 students have accepted a firm university choice and the remaining five are students who have elected to take a gap year, but who intend to go to university the following year. The Academy will therefore support them next year to ensure that they secure a place.

72% of the Year 13 students have accepted a place at a Russell Group University, although the Academy won't know if they're accepted until A level results day.

Not all students go on to study at a Russell Group University but choose equally good universities. The Academy has students who will progress to specialist courses. From the current Year 13, the Academy has students who have been offered places at the Royal Veterinary College, the University of London, St. Georges Medical School and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

This is a very positive picture in terms of the destinations to which students' progress.

The Year 11 progression into Sixth Form is looking very positive. 84% of the Academy's Year 11 cohort have put the Academy 6th Form as their first choice. The Academy had a welcome briefing today for external students, which was very successful and an update to the Board will be given after the students have enrolled in the Summer.

DW commented about the importance of promoting modern apprenticeships as well as promotion of attending a University.

7. Any other business

DW thanked everyone for their participation, especially the newly elected parent members of the Executive Board who observed the meeting before taking up their role from September and he also recognised the existing members of the Board who will be leaving their role and thanked them for all of their support and input since they have been members of the Executive Board.

The next Executive Board meeting will be Tuesday 11 October 2022.

Signed: 

Richard Whitcutt

Chair of the Executive Board

Date 11/10/2022