

**MINUTES OF THE 152nd MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023 AT 17.30**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stewart Harris (SH), Kevin Chamberlain (KC), Madeleine Hughes (MH), Tom Chmielewski (TC), Claire Peterson (CPE) and Pat Edmondson (PED)

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 17:30

DW welcomed colleagues to the Executive Board meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence came from Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS), who joined the meeting later.

4. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

5. Minutes of Last meeting held on Wednesday 3 May 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by DW.

DW referred to Item 5, regarding the Progress 8 score. DW sought clarification on the starting point for the progress made to GCSE level, based on SATS at entry. Were the latter assessed differently in different L.A. areas? DMI explained that SATs is a national standardised assessment.

DW referred to the teacher strike action. DMI confirmed that sixty teachers out of ninety-eight were present in the Academy today - four teachers were absent due to reasons other than the strike. DMI told the Board that the appropriate planning was in place on that day and for the forthcoming strike on Friday.

The minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 3 May 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. Principal's Report

DMI provided the Board with an update on the International Baccalaureate (IB) results, which were excellent, with the highest score achieved by a student being 43 and an average score of 38. DMI was pleased with the students' performance and the Board congratulated the Academy and its students on reaching this standard.

DMI informed the Board that all examinations were finished. DMI commended the students for their conduct during the exams and mentioned that the students' overall demeanour was positive.

DMI told the Board that four visits from members of staff from other schools who wish to see the Academy in operation were scheduled to take place before the end of the academic year. Each visit has provided positive feedback about the Academy as well as valuable insights for these external school staff. DMI also shared insights from a recent visit he made to the Michaela Community School in Wembley.

On attendance DMI told the Board that the national average for student attendance at secondary schools had now dropped to approximately 86%. The Academy is ranked in the top 25% of schools this year for student attendance.

DMI spoke about the staff members who will leave at the end of the academic year and their reasons for leaving. Nevertheless, the Academy is in a good position in so far as we have been able to attract and appoint enthusiastic, very competent new teachers who are very much aligned to the Academy's values and approach and who will join us in the new academic year. DMI commented, however, that the recruitment process was becoming progressively challenging.

DW commented that there is a noticeable trend of teachers opting for teaching positions abroad. DMI acknowledged this phenomenon and attributed it to factors such as the cost of living in London and the appeal of working in the international schools which are linked with some of the UK's most prestigious private schools .

TC asked about the recruitment of teachers from abroad. DMI proceeded to elaborate on the differences between the academic abilities of internationally trained teachers compared to those trained in the UK.

Attendance Report

DMI presented the attendance data, and asked the Board if they had any concerns or questions. No concerns were raised.

DMI informed the Board that two Year 10 students were in the process of leaving the Academy to move to other schools.

Accident Report

DMI shared the Accident report and asked the Board if they had any comments and there were no concerns.

Exclusion Report

DMI shared the exclusion report which detailed students who had been excluded and a discussion took place.

Safeguarding

DMI shared the safeguarding reports and DMI highlighted an upward trend in issues emerging within students' home environments – something the safeguarding team are dealing with more regularly.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 updates (Claire Peterson)

DMI told the Board that every year the Department for Education produced an updated version of the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (KCSiE) document. The revised document always reflects experiences or learning from the previous year.

There has been an increase in the number of issues of far-right extremism and CPE will present the measures in place to stop children from being lured into this world.

CPE reported on the updates that are being made to ATA's safeguarding documents, reflecting the changes made to KCSiE, which will be sent to the Board once they are completed.

The primary amendments are focussed on web access and internet safety. There are two sections: the first being staffing and the recruitment process (and the revised online safety checks) and the second is the way in which students access the internet in the Academy.

The main change is the expectation that all schools will have robust systems in place for monitoring and filtering student internet usage and blocks on inappropriate sites. The Academy's policy has been amended accordingly and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Network Department will run regular checks of both students and staff and report their findings to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Leadership Group.

CPE explained that the Home-Academy agreement, which all students are required to sign when they join the Academy, is helpful in so far as it describes good online behaviour and all internet usage rules.

All staff continue to complete online safeguarding training on an annual basis.

The teaching staff are very good at raising concerns about students' online activities and the updates in the guidance will be highlighted within the induction training for all new staff.

The new document places a strong emphasis on addressing issues relating to children missing in education.

The Board were informed that the revised documents would be circulated for their review.

DW inquired about the restrictions on staff members using social media. It was clarified that staff were expected to maintain private accounts and advised against disclosing account details.

TC sought ATA's guidance to parents regarding their children's online usage. ATA advise parents to monitor their children's usage on their devices and put in place the necessary blocks so students do not have access to damaging sites and pop-ups.

Developments for September 2023 (Douglas Mitchell)

DMI shared a presentation regarding the Strategic Plan to the Board and outlined the necessary changes, emphasising the pursuit of continuous improvement to all areas of the Academy, following which a discussion took place.

DMI will update the Strategic Plan over the summer and will share this with the Board for their comments.

7. Any other business

DW thanked everyone for their participation and continued support.

The next Executive Board meeting will be Wednesday 18 October in the Academy.

Signed: 

Richard Whitcutt
Chair of the Executive Board

Date 18/10/2023