

**MINUTES OF THE 151st MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
WEDNESDAY 3 MAY 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), Josh Hetherington (JHE) 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)

DW informed colleagues that Tony Bothwell had resigned his position on the Board after 13 years of support to both the Executive Board and Finance Committee, as well as having supported on several Discipline Review Committees. DW wished to formally record his gratitude to Tony for his loyal support over the years.

4. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

5. Minutes of Last meeting held on Tuesday 28 February 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by DW.

DW referred to Page 1 where DMI provided an update on the Progress 8 score, highlighting that the Academy ranks in the top 20 nationally.

DMI told the Board that he will provide a staffing update in his presentation.

DW referred to Page 3 with regards to moving the Learning Curriculum from the Professional Development into ECT's (Early Career Teachers) programme, DMI confirmed that 12 ECTs will be joining ATA in the new academic year. DMI told the Board that the development is progressing well for the ECTs.

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 28 February were agreed as a true and accurate record

6. Principal's Report

DMI told the Board that his presentation is an operational-based report, covering various topics.

Strike Action

DMI told the Board that there were 43 members of staff who took part in the strike on Tuesday and 41 staff took part in the strike on Thursday. It was expected that more staff would participate due to the government's response

to negotiations so far. The unions are now re-balloting for further strike action, which, if voted for by members, could take place in the final term of the academic year and the first term of the new academic year.

DW asked how many schools nationally have had to close due to the strike action. DMI said that he did not have that figure but did confirm that three schools in the Wandsworth area closed completely due to the strikes.

Exams

DMI informed the Board that the focus now is on the students in Years 11, 12, and 13. The International Baccalaureate exams have started and the A-Level and GCSE exams are about to begin.

Year 11 students have a well-structured revision program in place. The exam period has returned to the traditional period of four and a half weeks (it was a much longer exam period last year to accommodate any potential COVID-related issues) and will finish in mid-June. It has been confirmed by OfQUAL that grading will follow pre-COVID standards; however, there will be a degree of flexibility applied. This includes support information and formulae sheets for Maths and Science exams.

DMI confirmed that all Year 11 student have sat the French speaking exams this week and that colleagues were pleased with the overall performance of students.

SEN Students for Year 7

DMI highlighted the increase in significant needs of SEN students seeking a mainstream placement in the borough. and the budget deficit the Local Authority is working to reduce.

ATA have 10 places allocated for students with an EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) for the incoming Year 7. PED asked if the Academy is required to accept more than 10 EHCP students and DMI responded that this was not a requirement. DMI provided further details on the EHCP admissions.

Staff Recruitment

DMI informed the Board about the staff members who will be leaving the Academy at the end of the academic year and discussed the newly appointed staff. After a restructure of four departments to two departments, internal promotions have taken place and the new departments confirmed: Maths and Computing and the Arts and Technology.

DMI shared the information about upcoming trips and events in the academy.

Attendance Report

DMI shared the attendance report, stating that national attendance averages are around 88% for England, while the Academy's attendance stands at 96.3% which is significantly better than the average.

Accident Report

DMI presented the accident report and no comments or questions were raised.

Exclusion Report

DMI discussed the students who received exclusions and no questions or comments were raised.

Safeguarding

DMI shared the safeguarding report and no questions or comments were raised.

TC asked about the unions involved in the strike actions and whether their coordination was typical. DMI confirmed that the unions were coordinated.

He also asked about how students managed anxiety during exam preparation. DMI explained that this was something that the Academy pro-actively addresses in assemblies and in form.

TC also asked about ECTs (Early Careers Teachers) and what attracts them to ATA. DMI said that at interview, candidates mention our approach to behaviour management, our results and the personal development agenda for students. They also speak about our approach to professional development and their desire to be part of our programme. DW commented that teachers do seem to feel well supported at ATA which is a significant recruitment advantage.

Student forum

CPE presented information on the student forum to the Board. The forum involves a series of conversations held with small groups of students throughout the academic year. The conversations cover various topics, including safeguarding and academic success. The forums are made up of groups of students on rotation. The plan is that all students will participate in a forum over a two-year period. CPE has spoken to 100 students so far this year. The previous forum sessions have provided valuable insights, with homework an area of specific focus. Extra-curricular involvement and student engagement and accountability in lessons have also been covered.

This year in the safeguarding forums one recent focus has been on controversy surrounding Andrew Tate and challenging misogyny. Students have also discussed student journeys to and from school and how comfortable the students feel when walking to and from the Academy.

This term, the focus is praise and what valuable praise looks like to students. The information gleaned from the forums will help to establish a uniform approach to praise.

A summary of the forum is produced and shared with the Leadership Group. The findings are also shared with Curriculum Managers and Heads of Year. DW asked about the number of students involved, and it was explained that a rotating group of students are chosen by the Head of Year to participate, this will ensure that eventually every student would have a turn. Students were unaware of the topics until the day of the forum.

Strategic plan

DMI provided an overview of the strategic plan. DMI referred to PHA's presentation at the last meeting in relation to curriculum development and professional development. The key areas discussed were SEN, ICAS, safeguarding, and attendance monitoring.

DMI highlighted issues emerging post-Covid, including a rise in concerns related to domestic safeguarding and anxiety. Overall, ATA students have shown good resilience, resulting in lower numbers of such issues, but some students still require support.

Attendance is being well managed at ATA and the overall attendance in the Academy is high.

In terms of ICAS, ATA are mindful that external agencies are more limited now through lack of funding. For this reason, ICAS mentors will be trained to better support with issues of mental health, self-harm and anxiety so that they are able to identify and pro-actively deal with low-level concerns.

ATA have secured Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) practitioners for children in Years 10 and above who have reported low mood or anxiety. Additional training will be provided for SEN support staff to enhance the support of SEN students.