

**MINUTES OF THE 155th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2023 AT 17.30**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stewart Harris (SH), Madeleine Hughes (MH), Tom Chmielewski (TC), Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS) Phil Hall (PHA), Lucy Sargeant (LSA)

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 17:30

DW welcomed colleagues to the Executive Board meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence received from Kevin Chamberlain (KC) and Pat Edmondson (PED).

4. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

5. Minutes of Last meeting held on Wednesday 18 October 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by DW.

DW referred to Progress 8 discussion on page 2 and the national data set, which was released the day after the October meeting. DMI confirmed he had updated colleagues via email with the provisional Progress 8 number and the Academy's ranking nationally. DMI told the Board that the Academy will receive the final data set from the Government in January and that he will share this with the Board after it has been received.

DW asked about the permanent exclusions, which will be covered in DMI's presentation.

The minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 18 October 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. Principal's Report

DMI took the Board through his report.

DMI told the Board that the mock exams for Year 11 have now taken place and a simulated "results evening" along the lines of the real future event will take place after the Christmas break. Parents will be invited to the Academy to receive the students' results. ATA has no data as of yet, as the papers are still in the process of being marked.

The applications for the Sixth Form are looking good. ATA has received 200 internal applications, which is higher than in previous years, and the external applications are very healthy too.

DMI told Board that he has completed his updated DSL training and shared his observations.

DMI spoke about student attendance at the Academy. Fischer Family Trust data (FFT) shows that the Academy has a 6% higher attendance level than national averages. The Academy recently held a rewards event for all students who have been present for 100% of the time since we returned from the summer break.

DMI told the Board that exclusions – permanent and fixed-term - are the subject of well publicised discussions nationally. The Head of Ofsted's annual report had recently spoken openly about worsening behaviour in schools and some schools now being dangerous as a result. The Head of Ofsted had talked about the impact of Covid; fragmenting relationships between children and their parents and an over-eagerness for parents to complain to schools rather than listen and support. At the Academy, we can see a little of this trend, but we are confident that our approach and the support we offer has helped maintain excellent behaviour and positive relationships with parents.

Nationally, permanent exclusion rates are on the increase and DMI shared some national data from the previous year to give the Board a picture across schools.

DMI updated the Board about recent exclusions. ATA has increased the number of mentors working within the Inclusive Care and Support (ICAS) department to cater for the increased need in the Academy. ATA has in-house CAMHs support and also has a counsellor who has been working directly with the students in the Academy. This role has been necessary to recruit because the Local Authority ended its contract with Catch 22 counselling service last February and has not yet secured a new contract with another counselling service. The service the Local Authority is looking to engage, Place2Be, does not provide the same level of service the previous service provided.

TC asked a question about the fragmentation of relationships at home and possible causes. DMI explained that in some homes it is clear that the child is the dominant force and the parents feel unable to assert healthy boundaries and routines.

Attendance Report

DMI shared the attendance report and asked if anyone had any concerns. After a short discussion the Board were happy.

Accident Report

DMI shared the accident report, and asked if anyone had any concerns. After a short discussion the Board were happy.

Exclusion Report

DMI explained that the exclusion report was longer this time due to some students being caught vaping but ATA now has robust measures in place to identify any students that may be vaping in the Academy and a clear consequence will follow.

Safeguarding Report

DMI shared the safeguarding report and asked if the Board had any questions. DW asked for some minor amendments to be made and DMI said he will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Developing teaching practice – science of motivation (PHA)

PHA shared his presentation to the Board outlining the teaching practice across the Academy.

PHA explained to the Board that he took over the role at the start of the last academic year from Jen Calvert (JCA).

He looked at what could be done to improve ATA's national position even more. PHA confirmed that he routinely observes fantastic teachers at ATA teaching fantastic lessons. JCA had completed a huge amount of work around the science of learning and how students learn.

PHA's focus last year was greater student accountability and participation and the ways in which ATA could achieve even more for its students. The professional development surveys have shown that his work has been very successful.

PHA spoke about the science of motivation which is his focus for this year. He has conducted research, spoken with students and has created a schedule for the year which includes research-intensive training and practical sessions. He shared an overview of the programme with the Board and an overview of the sessions which have taken place already.

PHA spoke about the use of Iris and how this system is used to develop teaching practice across the Academy. Teachers record segments of their lessons and share these with their Iris partner who provides feedback for further development.

DW asked about improvement and the mechanism for reflection and checking for improvement. Who in the school looks at it critically? PHA said that the coaching pair will review the recorded lessons in the first instance and the PHA also observes teaching in this way in each of the curriculum reviews.

Curriculum reviews – impact (PHA)

PHA spoke about the curriculum review process which has gone through many iterations over the years.

referred to the work that had already been done by JCA, DMI and the Curriculum Managers (CMs) and the work of the curriculum review - to assess an aspect of teaching in each department. The intention of these reviews is to critically assess the strengths and areas of development in relation to the aspect of pedagogy under review. During the process, each CM will discuss their curriculum and its delivery.

Social curriculum (LSA)

DMI introduced Lucy Sargeant to the Board as an Associate member of the Leadership Group looking after Personal Development.

LSA has created a curriculum, which is run through form time and enhances and helps embed the themes and knowledge delivered through RS and Drama at KS3 and in CPSE lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11.

LSA spoke to the Board about the personal development of students and outlined the form time curriculum in her presentation.

A termly training takes place for all Form Tutors so they know how to approach sensitive topics which arise. The lessons are very structured.

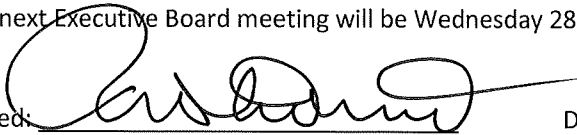
Lots of work is done in form time and Form Tutors play a huge part with the students day to day in the Academy.

DW asked if there was a clear link to the world of work. LSA explained that there is a whole strand of the Social Curriculum which focusses on careers and involves the workplace, but also how it applies examples of when students have learnt something and within the examples it will involve life not just in school but what it will look like within further education and what will it look like in the workplace. The skills are built up in a spiral from Year 7 and in Year 8 they look at how it is relevant to the GCSE options and by the time students come to leave the Academy the students are thinking about this all the time. DMI confirmed that specific links to the world of work could be made clearer in the curriculum and LSA would do that.

7. Any other business

DW thanked everyone for their participation and continued support.

The next Executive Board meeting will be Wednesday 28 February 2024.

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of the Executive Board

Date 28/2/2024