

**MINUTES OF THE 158<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON  
TUESDAY 9 JULY 2024 AT 17.30**

**Present:** Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE) via TEAMS, Stewart Harris (SH), Kevin Chamberlain (KC), Pat Edmondson (PED), Tom Chmielewski (TC), Jen Calvert (JCA), Phil Hall (PHA)

**In Attendance:** Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

**Start Time:** 17:30

DW welcomed colleagues to the Executive Board meeting.

### **3. Apologies**

Apologies were recorded for Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS)

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

### **5. Minutes of Last meeting held on Tuesday 30 April 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by DW.

DW referred to the Academy's IT security on page two of the previous minutes, which will be covered in DMI's report.

DW mentioned potential strike action, which DMI will update in his report.

DW asked for an update on the IB results, which will be covered in DMI's report.

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 30 April 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **6. Principal's Report**

DMI presented his report to the Board.

## **IB results**

DMI informed the Board that he would share a detailed grid that would include student grades and intended destinations. The average point score this year is 37 and the highest point score is 43. These point scores are pre-remark results, which means that both point scores could improve after successful remarks. Universities will not confirm places until after the A level results have been released so the IB students will receive confirmation in August.

## **School visits**

ATA have had several visits from senior staff in other schools, including staff in some local schools, to observe the way in which the Academy operates, particularly ICAS. DMI also updated the Board on a visit he and PHA made to Wembley High Technology College.

## **Curriculum Statement**

DMI shared the revised Curriculum Statement, which reflects the whole curriculum for all students – academic, pastoral and enrichment. The Leadership Group and Curriculum Managers have revised and added to this statement to replace the one which is currently on the website. DMI took the Board through the statement and asked if anyone had any questions.

RW asked about inclusion of “A” (for Arts) in the Academy’s definition of STEAM whereas elsewhere STEM seem to be more common and limited to refer only to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. DMI gave an explanation.

PE asked about ICT and whether this features prominently in ATA’s Year 7 and 8 curriculum because she is aware, through her work on admission appeal panels, that a number of local schools have removed the subject from their curriculum in the younger years. DMI explained that Year 7 and 8 students have two periods per week of Computing at ATA.

DMI reported on the outcome of the Head Student Team interviews and the scholarship interviews.

DMI spoke particularly about the students who had applied for an internal ATA scholarship of £500 which would contribute towards the cost of a course or work experience linked to their intended course of study at university. The process itself is rigorous – it involves a presentation to a panel and then an interview. DMI explained that he and the panel were very impressed by the quality of presentations and the levels of enthusiasm demonstrated by each candidate. The majority of the scholarships awarded will support students in their preparation for studying medicine.

DMI spoke to the Board about the Wemyss Foundation, which is a little-known charity based in South West London. It was founded by a couple who have created a Trust Fund for 6<sup>th</sup> Form students who are applying to university and who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. DMI took the board through the students who had applied this year and the amounts they will receive when they start at university. Three students have received a three-year grant.

## **Schools and clubs**

JCA has conducted a very comprehensive survey on the organised activities, clubs and sports that students engage in - in and out of school. The results of this study show that a very small minority of students do not engage in any club in school and students will be targeted in the new academic year and encouraged to engage in an activity each week which is outside of their timetabled lessons and homework. Form Tutors will, at the start of the year, actively sign students up to clubs and track their involvement.

### **Attendance**

DMI shared the most recent attendance data. The data shows that ATA's performance is significantly above national averages with an overall average attendance figure of 97.5%. ATA's persistent absence rate is significantly below national averages, however, the attendance of students with an EHCP is something that is being monitored more closely since more challenges exist in this group.

DMI asked if there were any questions and the Board were happy and there were no questions.

### **Accident report**

DMI shared the accident report, and asked if there were any concerns. The Board were happy that no consistent or worrying trends emerged.

### **Exclusion report**

DMI shared the report and a discussion took place on circumstances underlying the report.

PE asked whether a day at home in the form of a fixed-term exclusion is more or less effective than a day in ICAS. DMI gave an explanation why a combination of ICAS and fixed-term exclusion was important to deal with some situations. In the event of a fixed-term exclusion, there is a post-exclusion meeting with parents, a contract is created and signed and there is a period of mentoring for the student so that the same poor behaviour is not repeated. ICAS, in combination or as an alternative, gives the student close monitoring/mentoring whilst in school and is not seen as a "day off".

DMI asked if there were any questions about the exclusion report and the Board were happy.

### **Attendance and punctuality**

DMI shared the Attendance and Punctuality policy and outlined the changes which have been made to the policy and asked if there were any questions, of which there were none.

### **Development plan**

The development plan is designed to include the areas of further development required to meet the Academy's aims. One area that has already received some significant input is the SEND department and specifically the number of Teaching Assistants employed by the Academy and the support they provide. There is an identified need to reduce the number of Teaching Assistants and to redesign training programmes to help Teaching Assistants deliver more targeted support. This work is necessary financially and also as a response to the increase in the number of high-needs students the Academy is welcoming.

### **Network security**

DMI provided an update on Network Security and a new AI-based security program ATA has purchased. This system is the best in the market for analyzing the network and providing instant protection against all cyber and Ransomware attacks.

### **Attendance Policy – Jen Calvert (JCA)**

JCA reminded colleagues of the Social Curriculum and the work on developing more motivated students through developing teaching practice and developing the culture of student praise.

ATA has designed and implemented a successful Social Curriculum this year. The sessions are based on students' personal development and is an extension of ATA's CPSE curriculum.

This year, ATA will develop a curriculum, in the form of the Social Curriculum, on the 'ideal Academy student' and will focus on student praise and progress.

As part of this, participation in all Academy-delivered activities will be a particular focus, as well as participation in extra-curricular activities and in-house competitions, which are already very important to the students

JCA also spoke about the student attendance and the work undertaken by Academy staff to ensure excellent attendance. Changes to the Academy's approach are mainly a response to the changes in Department for Education guidance which will become statutory in September 2024. Fixed-penalty notices (FPNs) have changed in value and the number of times the Academy can issue an FPN has also changed. Moreover, unauthorised holidays taken more than three times in the academic year can lead to court action.

JCA explained that safeguarding is an ever-evolving process and ATA's approach is updated each year and reviewed throughout the year. The Department for Education's statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document is updated every year and the Academy's safeguarding policy is also updated each year to reflect the changes made to KCSIE.

## Development Plan – Phil Hall (PHA)

PHA spoke to the Board about the proposed developments to the Professional Development programme. He explained that he had visited three high-performing schools to observe their practice and identify elements of their excellent practice that he could introduce at ATA. These visits, he said, had been informative and had provoked deeper thinking and more informed internal discussion on the subject of the next phase of the Professional Development programme.

The first area for further development will be the introduction of an Induction Programme for new staff. PHA outlined the two-month programme to the Board.

The Induction Programme will assist all new members of teaching staff to become confident in the Academy's way of working and its expectations in the classroom. The programme will run in the same way as the ECT programme runs.

As part of this programme, PHA has led the creation and publication of a handbook for all new staff. This handbook provides detailed descriptions of excellence in each area of a teacher's work.

PHA also spoke about the Breakfast PD programme, which is the Academy's flagship Professional Development model. Last year the two key themes were: student accountability and maximising student participation in lessons. This year it moved to the science of motivation and the steps teachers need to take to build motivation in students.

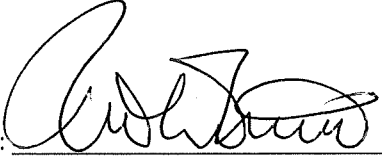
Next year's programme will be called 'Nudging the Norms'. PHA explained what this would entail.

DW asked about motivation for being a teacher at Ashcroft and PHA provided his views

## 7. Any other business

DW thanked Board Members for their participation in the meeting and their continued support of the Academy.

The next Executive Board meeting will be Tuesday 15 October 2024.

Signed:   
Richard Whitcutt

Date 15/10/2024

\*Chair of the Executive Board