

**MINUTES OF THE 150th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 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), Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS); Phil Hall (PHA); Josh Hetherington (JHE)

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 Pat Edmondson (PED)

4. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

5. Minutes of Last meeting held on Wednesday 14 December 2022

The minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 14 December were agreed as a true and accurate record.

DMI informed the Board about a Councillor from Wandsworth who had visited the Academy in response to a suggestion that the Local Authority might wish to establish a no-exclusion agreement amongst schools. The Councillor was very pleased with the way the Academy operates and its approach to behaviour management. ATA has not signed up to a no exclusion agreement.

6. Principal's Report

DMI shared his report with the Board and informed the Board that his report is relatively short this time.

DMI told the Board that the Academy had received an updated Progress 8 score of 1.14, which incorporates the successful re-marks and which was extremely pleasing. The Academy is in a very good position compared to other schools locally and nationally.

The Sixth form results are also very good, which means that the Academy's marketing to attract external students is equally good.

This is also great news for staff who have worked incredibly hard to support students. The Academy is confident, as it has some of the best teachers in the country teaching the students.

Staffing

DM informed the Board of the relatively high number of teaching resignations that have been received so far. DMI has spoken to all of the departing members of staff. Overall the three main reasons for leaving are: lockdowns are over and people are now more free to move around; the ECT programme runs for two years and some teachers are coming to the end of that programme and wish to work elsewhere or abroad now that they are fully qualified. The cost of living is having a huge impact, as young staff are unable to buy a property in London, rents are steeply on the rise and so they are having to move out. The Academy is confident that it will replace the staff it has lost and will continue to run recruitment processes until the correct candidates are appointed.

MH asked if there are promotion opportunities in the Academy and DMI said there would be an internal promotion possibility when there is an opportunity in a department. The Academy will always try to speak to staff and let them know of potential opportunities before they look to apply elsewhere.

Strike Action

DMI informed colleagues of the number of staff members who took part in the national strike days and he explained to the Board that these are being held in response to Government decisions on pay and conditions and not aimed at the Academy. DMI outlined the procedures in place at the Academy to manage the strike days. Further planning is in place for the two strike days scheduled for later in March, so that GCSE and A-Level students are unaffected.

Attendance

DMI asked the Board if they had questions about attendance statistics and referred to the figures in December which had dropped due to Strep A and a bug which was similar to Covid. ATA had experienced higher than average levels of absence due to both.

Accident Report

DMI shared the accident report and no concerns were raised.

Exclusions

DMI informed the Board that a student had been permanently excluded by him and that the Discipline Review Committee had subsequently met to hear the case and upheld the permanent exclusion. There was a short discussion about the national issue of vaping in schools which was part of the repeated behaviour problems relating to the specific exclusion. DMI is confident that this is a far less serious issue at ATA than elsewhere and explained the measures in place to eliminate vaping in the Academy.

MH asked about the number of Year 10 students who were on the report having incurred temporary exclusions. DMI explained that Year 10 is a challenging year group and that the challenges we experience are shared in the same year group in other local schools.

Safeguarding Report

DMI shared the safeguarding report with the Board.

6. Current Topic for discussion

i. Teacher development update (PHA)

PHA shared his presentation with the Board and gave them an update to the Teaching and Learning programme.

PHA talked about the Learning Curriculum, which Jen Calvert had introduced and which is a teacher development programme. It was decided this year to move the Learning Curriculum from the Professional Development programme into the ECT programme. This is only taught to new staff now as the more experienced staff have already been through this programme.

Non-ECT staff are invited to these sessions and more experienced members of staff can also attend if they feel they would like to revisit the content.

PHA talked about the introduction of professional development themes each term throughout the year. This followed feedback from teachers last year that suggested that sessions were very good but not always coherently structured, week by week. Termly themes were therefore created. The first six weeks were based on questioning techniques, the Christmas term focused on checking for understanding, and Terms 3 and 4 are based on preparation for assessments.

PHA wanted to create a programme that was coherent in its sequencing and would allow teachers to develop their understanding at a much more granular level.

PHA told the board that he has now taken over looking after the Professional Development and the ECT programme which has given PHA oversight of both programmes and can therefore make sure that both programmes are aligned.

PHA spoke about the use of IRIS which was originally used for interview lessons and is now used for teacher development.

Teachers were asked for their feedback on IRIS and their response was that they were happy with the professional development programme but struggled with the demand of filming and reviewing.

The programme was designed this year so that the teachers would not have to record their lessons on a weekly basis. Instead they can be recorded every couple of weeks, although the ECT's will continue to record on a weekly basis.

PHA shared the Data from IRIS around the teacher recordings. The data comparison shows that the usage has actually increased, despite the removal of the requirement to film every week.

There has been an increased focus on pedagogy within departments and imbedding the learning from the Breakfast PD programme into subjects. A lot of work has been done with CMs to support with this.

PHA has spent a lot of time on student focus and on what more ATA can do to maximise student participation. A focus has also been placed on student oracy, that is raising expectations around student communication and challenging students when they use slang or very informal language when they communicate with each other and with members of staff.

PHA spoke about the curriculum review, which has developed into a review of pedagogy as the curriculum is in such a strong place. PHA is now focussing more on the way the curriculum is delivered, and striving for outstanding teaching practice.

An additional termly focus has been included for CMs alongside the standard curriculum review. This is so that CMs can concentrate on the development of one significant area at a time. Before Christmas the focus was

assessment structure, and currently, departments are reviewing their homework model. PHA is pleased with the progress so far and anticipates that the work on homework will continue into the summer term.

DW asked if there was a way of sharing this excellent practice with other schools and advertising training sessions for interested teachers. DMI said that this was not something that he would be keen to do because this training exists to develop our staff and to enable them to design and deliver excellent lessons. Our focus should always be on that because the students benefit enormously – and so do teachers. If we were to run training sessions for other schools, our focus would be taken away from our students and staff, which could potentially have a negative impact.

ii. 6th Form Update (JHE)

JHE provided the Board with an update on the 6th Form in the Academy.

JHE spoke about the Year 13 progression to University. Over 60% of ATA's students have moved to a Russell Group University and JHE is pleased to see that the Academy has maintained this high level which ATA has secured for a few years.

The application process has been streamlined quite significantly and ATA has changed the way in which the students think when submitting their applications. JHE is pleased to inform the Board that this process is working well.

JHE noted that slightly more students than usual had opted to take a gap year due to various personal reasons.

Year 11 Students

JHE outlined to the Board the number of students who have applied to the sixth form this year. It is a very positive situation and the highest number of applications the 6th Form has had. JHE noted that next year the student numbers will rise again due to the additional form in the year group (currently Year 10 was the first year group to move from a 7-form entry to an 8-form entry).

The Academy has had good levels of interest from external students.

JHE outline the criteria and process for the students on results day.

The Academy has had a total of 75 applications for the IB programme and the Academy has offered 48 places. 8 students have switched to A level.

JHE shared the total number of students on roll in the 6th Form which was 267 students and is pleased with what is in place for the students.

JHE asked if the Board had any questions.

MH asked how many students the Academy can take in the 6th form and DMI commented that the maximum would be approx. 280.

7. Any other business

DW thanked everyone for their participation and continued support.

The next Executive Board meeting will be Wednesday 3 May in the Academy.

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of the Executive Board

Date 3/5/2023