

**MINUTES OF THE 157<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON  
TUESDAY 30 APRIL 2024 AT 17.30**

**Present:** Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stewart Harris (SH), Kevin Chamberlain (KC), Pat Edmondson (PED), Tom Chmielewski (TC), Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS), Joshua Hetherington (JHE), Lucy Sargeant (LSA)

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

**Start Time:** 17:30

DW welcomed colleagues to the Executive Board meeting.

### **3. Apologies**

Apologies were recorded for Madeleine Hughes (MH)

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

No interests were declared.

### **5. Minutes of Last meeting held on Wednesday 28 February 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by DW.

DW referred to pages one and two of the previous minutes with regards to attendance and the support the Academy received from the local Authority. DW asked what support the Academy receives from the Local Authority in terms of support for attendance.

DMI updated the Board about level of support the Academy receives from the Local Authority.

DW referred to gender identity and asked if there were any additional measures in place since the last meeting. DMI informed the Board that ATA is compliant with the recommendations from the Government's report and the CASS report.

DW referred to Ofsted and DMI confirmed he will update the Board in his report.

The minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 28 February 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

DMI took the Board through his report.

DMI said that the main focus in the Academy at the moment is IB, A level and GCSE exams.

DMI introduced LSA and JHE. JHE would give the EB a brief update on the number of applications the Academy has received for the sixth form and the projected university destinations for Year 13 students.

DMI confirmed he will update the Board about the Academy's IT security in light of a ransomware attack at local secondary school.

### **GCSE, A level and IB Exams**

DMI told the Board that the GCSE exams will start on the following Tuesday. The IB Exams have already started and the Year 13 A Level students will begin their exam leave on 13 May 2024. The GCSE French speaking exams took place the previous Tuesday and Wednesday and the fine art exams will take place on Thursday and Friday of the current week.

### **Ofsted**

DMI explained that, Nationally, there have been mixed reactions from schools and educationalists around the one-word judgements from Ofsted. There was talk that the Government may agree to review the one-word judgements for schools in an article published by the Times newspaper at the weekend. However, the Government's response to the Select Committee's report (just published) was that the one-word summary judgement would not change but Ofsted would review the framework for inspection. A discussion was then had amongst the Board.

ATA are next due for a visit from Ofsted in 2026.

### **Potential Strike action**

DMI told the Board that there is the potential for more strike action from the teachers who are part of the NEU (National Education Union). The proposed pay rise for teachers has not been published yet and the Union are waiting for this to happen before they decide the level of action they will take.

ATA would like to avoid any disruption to the new academic year.

### **School Exclusion Rates**

The data, which has been produced by the Government, confirms that exclusion rates have gone up significantly and will peak by the end of the academic year. DMI shared with the Board his findings when he visited another secondary school recently. ATA has many 'protective' factors in place, which support student behaviour and help to avoid exclusion. At ATA, the hard-line we take on vapes has meant that exclusion numbers are higher since this is a current widespread issue in schools. The

consequence of this is that at ATA we do not have a vape problem, as is the case in other schools locally and nationally.

ATA exclusion rates in the Academy are relatively low.

### **Student attendance**

ATA is pleased with the student attendance figures. DMI shared details of the year groups. The Year 11 attendance is very good compared to other schools nationally.

### **SEN**

DMI confirmed ATA has 18 EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) students joining the Academy in Year 7. ATA is still receiving EHCP consultations for other year groups.

DW asked what the process was for removing a child with an EHCP who is moving to another school. DMI said that the parent must name a new school. That school is then consulted and if the school say that they cannot meet the needs of the child, they must provide the reasons why this is the case. In such cases, the Local Authority can direct the school to accept the child.

DW asked about the capacity for the Autistic Resource Centre (ARC) base and DMI confirmed that ATA can accommodate 16 students in the ARC base.

### **Year 7**

DMI told the Board that ATA has 102 siblings joining the Academy for the incoming Year 7.

### **6<sup>th</sup> form**

JHE provided an overview of university applications and the number of offers received.

JHE shared that 97% of Year 13 students have applied to university, 84% have received offers from Russell Group Universities and eight students have received offers to study dentistry.

JHE said that 24% of students have applied for London-based universities or the University of Surrey.

The University of Surrey is very popular as it allows students to return home very easily so students can live at home while attending university.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Form has received 196 internal applications for a place in next year's Year 12 and 309 external applications. This is very positive when compared with application numbers in previous years.

### **Staffing**

DMI shared with the Board the staffing update and national data which shows that the numbers applying for teacher training has dropped significantly.

DMI shared his thoughts with the Board on alternative recruitment routes but will explore these in much greater detail in due course.

The recruitment process continues for positions as yet unfilled.

DMI told the Board that six former students have been employed as Teaching and Learning Assistants for the next academic year.

DMI shared the leavers and joiners list with the Board.

#### **Accident Report**

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

#### **Exclusion Report**

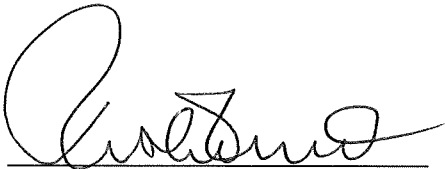
DMI shared the exclusion report and a discussion was had.

### **7. Any other business**

JHE shared with the Board an IT update and the steps the Network team are taking to make sure that the Academy is protected against any possible attacks.

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

The next Executive Board meeting will be 9 July 2024.

Signed: 

Richard Whitcutt

\*Chair of the Executive Board

Date 9/7/2024