

**MINUTES OF THE 125<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON  
WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2017 AT 17.30**

**Present:** Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Stewart Harris (SH), Angela Entwistle (AEN), Patricia Edmondson (PED), Richard Perry (RJP), Keith Wilson (KWI), Simon Jones (SJO), Tony Bothwell (TBO), Rachel Jarvis (RJ), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Cheryl John (CHJ), Cristina Carli Nonnato (CCN), Phil Hall (PHA), Jennifer Calvert (JCA)

**Apologies:** Steven Nash (SNA)

**In Attendance:** Clare Sallah (CS) (Minutes)

**Start Time:** 17:40

## **1. STAFFING CHANGES**

The appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair took place. DW and AEN were nominated for these roles and were accepted to continue as Chair and Vice Chair of the Executive Board.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Steven Nash (SNA).

## **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 19 July 2017 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings, and duly signed by the Chair.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING (*not covered under items below*)**

DW wrote to several retiring members of staff to thank them for their long service, as promised in the last meeting.

*Photos from last year's prize-giving* - DMI has sourced the photos and will send a copy to those who request them.

*Dates of Executive Board and FRC meetings for 2017/18* - DW said he hoped colleagues would make every effort to attend all meetings and he asked members to give plenty of notice of absence, because meetings do need to be quorate - especially the FRC meetings.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

## **6. THE START OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR**

DMI explained that the new Head of the Sixth Form has quickly settled into his role and students are responding well to him.

DMI also said that he was delighted with the new Year 7 cohort. He said they were a happy year group who have settled in very well.

DMI said he was pleased with the new staff members. They are teaching good lessons and the students are responding very well to them.

He was particularly pleased with the Year 11 cohort and their work ethic. The current Year 11 students are very different from last year's group. DMI was responsible for the Year 11s last year and when he took over they were not prepared in the way the current Year 11 group is to take on the rigours of GCSE exams. Consequently, they are working very hard.

**ACTION**

DMI

## 7. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS FOR DISCUSSION (presentations):

### a. 2017 Examination Results and strategic targets for this academic year – DMI

The A2 results are excellent. Our Year 13 students were very ambitious students, who worked hard to give of their best and to achieve the very best results. Over 60% secured their first choice of university.

Presented with ATA results in a local context, DMI said that we are the best 6<sup>th</sup> Form locally. Graveney School is our main competitor and we have out-performed them.

DMI presented the data included in this year's ALIS report. ALIS uses the grade point average at the start of Year 12 to generate a target grade for every student in every subject. The A2 analysis compares actual performance against predicted performance and measures the value added. The graph shows that we have added significant value. For this to happen, ATA staff work phenomenally hard, as do our students.

DW said that the 6<sup>th</sup> Form was not high-achieving in the past and that the ALIS analysis was proof of the hard work that has taken place over recent years. He said he couldn't believe it.

*Value Added* - DMI showed the three-year average for each of the A-level subjects. Where there is under-performance, staff changes and line management changes have altered the work in these departments for the better. The graphs show, therefore, a steady improvement in areas that were previously less good.

DMI said that AS results were slightly down this academic year. They have gone up and down over the years. One of the reasons for this is that the AS results don't now count towards the overall grade for A-Level, so count mainly as a passport into Year 13. Nevertheless, this year is the first year we have been able to access the marked scripts online. As a result of this change, departments have learnt a great deal about their students' performance which they can use to support this year's students.

ACH, our new Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form, has designed a programme to support Year 12 students who struggle to meet the requirements of 6<sup>th</sup> Form study.

DMI explained that a great deal had been reported in the press in August about one school's move to reject students who achieved less than BBB in their AS exams. Parents of Year 12 students at St. Olave's grammar school in Orpington challenged the school's decision and started legal action before the Head Teacher capitulated and allowed the students who did not meet the BBB requirement to enter into Year 13. In response to this, the Department for Education released a statement to say that it was not correct to exclude students from Year 13 study on the basis of their performance in AS exams. No parents challenged our decisions because our requirements are very low, and if students are achieving E or U grades in their AS exams, it is very unlikely that they will pass an A2 exam. Neighbouring schools' admissions criteria still include entry requirements for Year 13, as do we. I explained to Year 12 parents that we would continue to monitor and track Year 12 students, and if we notice that students are not making good progress, we will intervene. If, despite support, students do not achieve DDD in their AS exams, they will not be permitted to continue into Year 13 on the same courses. Instead, we would offer a more appropriate course or we would help students to find a more suitable course in another post 16 provider.

*GCSE results* - DMI said these GCSE results were for the last year group for which he was responsible. They achieved 84% 5 + A\*/9-C/4 grades. DMI showed a chart of the GCSE results. The specifications are changing each year, so it is difficult to compare results year on year. However, on all measures, these results are our best ever. Our progress 8 score last year was +0.48. This year, our progress 8 score is +0.80, this is a phenomenal achievement and based on last year's ranking, this score would place ATA in the top 15 state maintained schools nationally.

DW said that, with this school's deprivation profile (pupil premium), this is a particularly impressive achievement. Our progress 8 score for our disadvantaged students is +0.68. While this is slightly lower than the whole cohort's score, it is a very high score to achieve, and an improvement on last year's score of +0.40.

GROMPS (Grammar Comprehensives) are state maintained schools (comprehensives) that behave like grammar schools. They have longer days, strict discipline, and strict uniform. ATA is not on the list of these schools currently, but DMI said he was determined that the Academy will be in their top ten list in the future.

*ATA Strategic Plan* – DMI said that Controlled Assessment was disappearing entirely. Previously, this element enabled teachers to support students through elements of their courses, but now students must learn, revise and practice for terminal exams. For this reason, Study Hall and Power Hours have already started for Year 11 students. These ensure that students who might not study at home do so at school. We are opening this up to Years 8, 9 and 10 to encourage them into good habits.

We are researching and piloting ways of improving student progress by improving teachers' understanding and use of student data. PHA, our Associate Deputy Principal, will present on this topic at December's Executive Board meeting. DMI also said that key staff will look at success outside the Academy and bring good practice back into the Academy.

Each year, the Academy reviews its study programmes for Year 11, 12 and 13 students and enhances these. Individual tutorials and other associated activities will take place for Year 13 students. The development of the Honours Programme for gifted and talented students is an example of a super curriculum offer. In addition to this, there will be a rejuvenated D&T enrichment programme which will allow students to participate in DT study through Science and Maths.

The Academy is also looking to re-design the Pathways programme to help students opt for the most appropriate GCSE courses.

KSH, the Lead teacher for ARC, has resigned and will leave at Christmas. KSH is an incredibly experienced teacher in ARC, and her departure, in the context of an increase in the number of students joining ARC, means that we will have to look at the structure of the department and the training we provide for Teaching and Learning Assistants so that we enable the cohort to be successful.

DW said that the local authority is putting increasing pressure on the Academy to take students with a severe Autistic diagnosis, such that we wouldn't be able to include them in mainstream classes. DMI said that it is clear in our original agreement that we accept students who can access mainstream education.

DW said that item c. 'Recruitment and retention', should be moved to the December meeting, as DMI's report has overrun.

*Achieving improvement in Teaching and Learning* – JCA said that she and PHA were looking at evidence-based research and strategies to include in our professional development programme. Ofsted are looking to see schools adopt research-rich practice.

*The Hub* - Next term, JCA said that there will be a wider range of professional development opportunities for staff and she will be encouraging Curriculum Managers to direct team members to specific activities.

### ***Developing partnerships – PHA***

PHA said that there will be a degree overlap on what he and JCA are doing. He said the school had made significant progress in the past two years. In order for this to continue, we have joined the Teacher Development Trust. With the trust, we will complete an online self-audit and take an in-depth look at our professional development processes, both internal and external, to gauge how we are performing. PHA also said he had set up a link with a colleague who had moved to another school and is also using PD to form links with other schools.

RW said he was impressed and it was very good to share practice with other schools.

## 5. THE REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL

*Forthcoming events* – These need to be on the Principal’s report and on the website. DMI will ensure that this is the case in future.

*Year 9 and 10 Curriculum Evening* – An email should be sent to parents regarding this, if it hasn’t already.

## 6. REPORT OF THE VICE PRINCIPAL

RJP explained that the notes from the meeting on 19 July 2017 had been circulated to the Executive Board for their information.

*Capital Developments* – The FRC have agreed to continue with TYCO/ADT to upgrade the CCTV monitoring system. Over the summer, 113 computers were upgraded.

RJP said that he wanted to improve the comfort levels in Zones C and D and had booked a consultant to look into improving these areas. At present, Zones C and D can become unbearably hot.

Two of the gyms have been renovated with LED lighting, and the third will be completed during the term break.

*Revenue Funding*- RJP said that the Academy year-end for accounting purposes is 31 August and prior to any year-end adjustments has incurred a deficit of approximately £150,000, which is in line with what he had predicted. ATA have reserves to be able to cope with such a deficit in the short to medium term.

RJP said that a 4% reduction in expenditure had been made possible due to salary efficiencies this year.

*Trading Company* – RJP reported that financial performance had been a little lower than last year. There was a smaller profit margin resulting at the year end, but it was still a decent performance and a useful supplement to the Academy’s income.

## 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

*Prize-giving* – DMI would like to propose a date at the end of January for the Prize-giving Evening. He told Executive Board members that they were warmly invited and he would encourage as many to attend as possible.

The meeting ended at 19:10

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 7 December 2017. Later amended to Wednesday 13 December 2017.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Richard Whitcutt**  
Chair of Executive Board

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2017