

**MINUTES OF THE 148th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2022 AT 17.30**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stuart Harris (SH) via conference phone, Madeleine Hughes (MH) Maria Chiara Sechi (MCS) Tom Chmielewski (TC), Mike Smith (MSM), Claire Peterson (CPE).

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 17:30

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

The appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair took place. DW and AEE had been nominated and they agreed to continue in their current roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Board.

2. Membership of the Executive Board

DW welcomed the new members of the Executive Board and asked the new members of the Board to introduce themselves and to share their background.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absences came from Tony Bothwell (TB), Kevin Chamberlain (KC) and Patricia Edmondson (PED).

4. Declarations

No interests were declared.

5. Minutes of Last meeting

DW referred to Page 3 of the minutes and the confirmation that 120 Year 13 students had accepted their firm University choice. He asked if that means that all of the Year 13 students apply for University and that no students apply for apprenticeships. DMI confirmed that this is the case this year and that there are students who have taken a gap year but who are applying to university for next year.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 5 July 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. Principal's Report

DMI shared his report with the Board.

DMI informed the Board that he would start with highlights from his report, then discuss the strategic plan and the Academy's exam results which would be presented in more depth by Mike Smith (MSM).

DMI told the Board that the Exam results all students had achieved this year were superb and that he was delighted to see so many happy students on results days. Every year the DfE release the national data set which includes each school's progress 8 score. This data is sent to individual schools before it is published.

DMI told the Board that the Academy is delighted with the Progress 8 score of +1.13 it received – this score reflects the students’ hard work and the expertise of the staff in preparing the students for these exams – and DMI waits eagerly to hear its place in relation to other schools. However, the DfE are expected to make changes to the way in which school performance data is published this year because it seems keen that schools do not compare themselves against each other. The pandemic impacted schools in different ways and the DfE therefore believes that it would be somewhat unfair to compare.

The Board agreed they would like to record their thanks and congratulations to the school staff for all of the hard work which has helped achieve these results.

DMI explained that the examination results currently declared will get somewhat better in the final analysis because a number of papers have since been remarked and returned with an improved grade. These grades will influence the final Progress 8 score which will be released in February.

Open Events

DMI was pleased to inform the Board about the Open Events. The Academy welcomed a significant number of parents and prospective students seeking a place in Year 7 and in the 6th Form for September 2023. The number attending 6th Form events has increased immensely. Josh Hetherington has worked extremely hard to promote the Sixth Form and this work has paid off.

The Academy’s reputation is very strong and the students who have visited us are focussed on joining the Academy.

SEN

DMI explained to the Board that there has been an increase in the number of applications for students with Special Educational Needs at the same time that there has been a decrease in the amount of funding that is available to support these students. The Academy has received more consultations for children who have an EHCP (education and Healthcare Plan) this year than in previous years.

A lot of work is done behind the scenes to determine whether the Academy can accommodate the needs of the student contained in their EHCP. DMI explained the admissions process for a student with an EHCP and the ways in which this differs from a mainstream application.

The Academy is one of three schools in the Local Authority that runs an autistic base. Students in ARC (our autistic resource base) are supported for access to lessons in the main school, rather than being educated separately. This is not the case in other schools with provision for autistic students. Three bases in the LA area for students with autism is no longer sufficient to meet the demand and there is a primary school which has been identified to convert to being a school for children with special needs and DMI will keep the Board updated with the progress.

Early Career Teachers (ECTs)

DMI told the Board that the new ECTs have started very well and that the Academy is pleased with all of the appointments for this year. The Government is going to increase the bursaries associated with some PGCE courses, so DMI is hopeful that there will be a number of good qualified PGCE students looking for positions next year.

Capital works

The Academy has a lift in Zone D which needs to be refurbished (this forms part of a bigger schedule of work to eventually renovate all three main lifts in the Academy) but there has been a delay with the delivery of the parts needed to complete the job. The Academy is hopeful that the works will be complete by April.

Considerations on the future use of the Openview facility are progressing at good pace.

Attendance

DMI told the Board that a number of students had not returned from the summer break for the start of the academic year. Consequently, the average percentages are relatively low but these percentages will increase over the next few months. The average attendance is 89% for England which is low. And compares with 96% in the Academy

Accident Report

DMI shared the Accident Report and the Board agreed that all areas appear fine and no concerns were raised.

Exclusions

DMI told the Board that the fixed-term exclusions list is larger than normal due to some students' poor behaviour outside the Academy.

There is a big issue nationally with students using "vapes". The Academy is lucky as it does not have a huge number of students using vapes, because a strong message to deter them has been incorporated into assemblies. ATA students are very clear on the consequences of vaping.

Safeguarding

DMI shared with the Board an overview of safeguarding concerns which the Academy receives.

He talked about the disclosures which the safeguarding team receive and the ways in which the Academy supports these students.

The Academy has the ICAS department which has a dual function. It underpins the Behaviour Policy perfectly, it works well as a removal centre and a lot of work is done to reintroduce the student back into the school. It also plays an important part in supporting students with mental health concerns, students suffering from or have suffered from abuse or students who are experiencing a difficult period in their lives.

Strategic Plan

DMI spoke about the Strategic Plan briefly and discussed this in the context of its being a working document which he will report on at each meeting with the changes that have been implemented. DMI said he had discussed the final document circulated amongst Board members in detail with DW but asked if anyone else had any further comments on it.

TC asked about the reference to Early Careers Teachers being enticed to new roles and what The Academy does to stop the teachers from leaving. DMI outlined some of the incentives that make ECT's wish to stay at ATA but they are prime recruitment targets for other schools, including moves to the private school sector who offer much higher salaries. The Academy staff are well supported but if they are looking for progression, and the Academy cannot accommodate their progression, we accept that staff will look for opportunities in other schools.

TC asked about the Academy's careers education programme for students and DMI confirmed this can be found on the website.

TC asked if the Academy had a student exchange programme, but DMI outlined that it is difficult due to safeguarding checks among families.

DMI confirmed that the Academy has five Ukrainian students currently attending the Academy.

6. Current Topic for discussion

i. Results' analysis and departmental responses (MSM)

MSM shared his presentation with the Board which provided a background to the way in which students were examined this year.

Results have increased across all subjects and levels nationally.

Year 11

MSM described the Attainment 8 measures and the way in which this is calculated.

MSM shared with the Board the attainment 8 figure achieved by all students in the Academy and then the figures achieved by disadvantaged students and SEN students.

The more important measure is the Progress 8 score which calculates the progress students make from the end of Year 6 to the end of Year 11. The better the progress score, the better a school is at making sure its students make excellent progress.

MSM told the Board that Ashcroft's Progress 8 score is 1.13 which is excellent as the national figure is around -0.03. This means that on average each student achieves more than one extra grade in their GCSEs than would be predicted by UK typical progress from year 6 to year 11.

While the results overall were incredibly strong, the Academy is not complacent and the results also inform which subject areas need to be looked at and discussions are taking place in the Academy to see what worked well and what needs more attention going forward.

A Level

A level is difficult to discuss as there are no progress scores covering this level, as yet.


MSM shared with the Board the comparison between 2019 and 2022 and the average point score moved from a C+ to B+ which is very good. The Academy's students' results were amazing and they were able to secure the Universities of their choice.

DW and the Board were very pleased with the exam results for the Academy.

7. Any other business

DW thanked everyone for their participation and continued support.

The next Executive Board meeting will be Wednesday 14 December 2022

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of the Executive Board

Date 14 / 12 / 2022