

**MINUTES OF THE 135th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY
ACADEMY ON WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Cristina Carli Nonnato (CCN), Stewart Harris (SH), Patricia Edmondson (PED), Steven Nash (SNA), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Kevin Chamberlain (KC), Phil Hall (PHA), Amit Chadda (ACH).

Absent: Rachel Branagan (RB) and Tony Bothwell (TB).

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 17:30

1. Apologies

Apologies were passed on from RB and TB who could not attend due to work commitments.

DW confirmed that three parent representatives have agreed to stay on for a further term; they are SN, CCN and PE.

Welcome to JKD formally, who was introduced as replacement of Conor Hewitt.

2. Declarations

No interests were declared

3. Minutes of Last meeting

CCN raised a question about the offensive weapons protocol that had been proposed for adoption by schools within the Borough, DMI said that we have heard nothing further from Wandsworth.

DMI advised the Board that the Curriculum Review Group has met. DW said he and colleagues were impressed with the work the Academy has conducted in relation to the curriculum.

Curriculum Overviews will be available on the Academy's website by the end of February.

The Academy was asked to provide an update after the recent critical incident. ACH advised the Board that he is in regular contact with the student, who is receiving mentoring and support and advised that the outcome is favourable.

No other actions/updates resulted from the minutes other than those covered in today's reports. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

No further matters were raised beyond those covered above

5. Principal's Report

DMI discussed the Inspection Data Summary Report. Leadership Colleagues had found the report quite thin when compared to previous versions. The document does not contain as much detail since a briefer format had been adopted, in line with current Ofsted expectations that somewhat less emphasis in inspection should be placed on results and more on the 'substance of education'.

DW asked why 'criteria not being met' featured so much in the report. DMI explained that a "no comment" in the report means that the data for that particular comment is insignificant.

In London based schools, there is more student movement. ATA fixed-term exclusions rates are significantly below national rates. ICAS and regular mentoring are the reasons for this low rate.

DMI was asked to explain why languages are indicated red in the report and demonstrate a decline since last year against national averages. This is because the Academy prepares and presents all Year 11 students for GCSE French – i.e. it is not an optional subject as we think all students should be exposed to a foreign language, at least to GCSE level. The only other schools to do this are Grammar Schools. Generally, secondary schools only present the most able for GCSE French, which skews the national data set for this subject. The Academy Cohort is therefore compared to students who are selected to, or who opt to, study French. As a result, this is not a like-for-like comparison. Furthermore, the pass mark and the grade boundaries were raised this year, which negatively affected our students' grades. The Academy has been reassured by the exam board that grade boundaries will return to the percentages used in 2018.

DMI explained the subject clusters available to students and said that he will circulate the subject cluster list; however, students at the Academy will always have the opportunity to be presented for 14 of the 17 subject clusters. At present, the Academy does not offer Latin, Engineering or Critical Thinking, which account for the remaining three subject clusters.

CCN raised the issue that the Academy has a high percentage of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students, compared to other schools. DMI explained that ATA welcomes more students who are in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or SEN support and Wandsworth actively encourage this because the provision is very strong and so are the results that ATA students who receive some form of SEN support achieve.

Student attendance data has been reformatted in the Principal's report to display attendance by protected characteristic.

6. Exclusion data

The slight increase in the number of fixed term exclusions was discussed. DMI explained to Board members that a one-off incident involving four students had resulted in two fixed term exclusions per child in addition to ICAS intervention and mentoring. In the case of each student, there have been no behavioural issues since this incident and DMI is confident that the sanctions imposed have had the desired outcome.

DW requested that the accident report (which has been important for the Board to overview for any indications of undue concentrations of risks), should nevertheless include the more serious incidents only from now on. This would be a difficult judgement for those compiling the report but it had been growing over-long by inclusion of minor bumps and scrapes which were relatively insignificant.

7. Safeguarding

8. Current Developments for Discussion

ARC Report

DMI presented and discussed a recent review of ATA's Autistic Resource Centre provision conducted by Wandsworth SEN colleagues.

Of particular note, the culture of ambition for all students, the support provided to students in ARC and the leadership of the base were celebrated in the report. ARC students thrive being in mainstream lessons with support, but there are still some areas that can be developed further. While students' academic performance is analysed by LG, Curriculum Managers, Heads of Year and subject staff, the report highlights a preference for the academic performance of ARC students to be tracked by a separate system in ARC.

ACH met with the Borough to discuss the report. The Academy's development plan was shared with colleagues at the last meeting and ARC is included in that document.

Safeguarding

PHA presented to colleagues the Academy's safeguarding policy and practices and training associated with the Board's responsibility for ensuring that we are compliant in this important area. The Safeguarding Team has now been extended, with PHA as the Lead and two deputies - Niall Dooley and Liza Gardner.

PHA has led assemblies with all year groups so that they are aware of processes and whom they can speak to. Furthermore, the Senior Safeguarding Lead at Wandsworth was asked to conduct a review into Academy practices so it can be confident over its effectiveness and understand any areas for development, should there be a need.

PHA explained to Colleagues that the Academy works very closely with the Senior Safeguarding lead at Wandsworth as a matter of routine and also closely with external agencies when dealing with cases that are more serious. All staff receive safeguarding training throughout the year. More focussed refresher training on Prevent FGM, and CSM are being delivered this year.

A good team of mentors work with our students and DMI spoke of safeguarding issues which affect a student's attendance.

CCN asked about the approach Academy staff adopt if a child has problems but will not discuss them with a member of staff. PHA advised that students are encouraged to speak about their concerns and staff usually have the relationship, trust and skill to get them to do so. DMI explained that the priority is that students can speak with any member of staff with whom they are comfortable, and they have been given permission to raise worries about friends if their friends do not wish to speak with a member of staff straight away.

Staff will always refer any issues to PHA. The more students receive mentoring in ICAS, the more the Academy learns of issues at home which can be treated before they can develop into concerns that are more serious.

RJP explained that EB colleagues are not required to have an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) background check because they are never undertaking regulated activity in the main body of the Academy that requires such checks to be undertaken.

A Safer Recruitment Policy has been written and will be added to the website.


PHA presented three case studies to Colleagues so that they understood the processes the Academy follows when confronted with different safeguarding issues. A general concern was discussed about Wandsworth's thresholds for intervention, parental engagement when families are in crisis, the limited power to act and a perceived lack of consistency across Wandsworth's social work team.

9. Vice Principal's Report

RJP proposed to produce his report as he currently does which will still be issued to EB members to read and they will be able to comment or raise any issues rather than RJP talking through it at the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

No other business

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of Executive Board

Date: 11/Dec/2019 20