

**MINUTES OF THE 133rd MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
THURSDAY 11 JULY 2019 AT 17.30**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Stewart Harris (SH), Kevin Chamberlain (KC), Patricia Edmondson (PED), Phil Hall (PHA), Jen Calvert (JCA).

Absent: Tony Bothwell (TBO), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Steven Nash (SNA), Rachel Branagan (RB), Cristina Carli Nonnato (CCN).

In Attendance: Conor Hewitt (COH) (Minutes)

Start Time: 17:30

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were passed on from TBO, SNA, RB and CCN. AEE had made herself contactable by phone during the meeting and was available to enter the discussion if needed.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed.

3. Matters Arising

DW informed colleagues that KC will be joining the Finance & Resources Committee (FRC) from the beginning of the next academic year and thanked him on behalf of the Trust for doing so. His commercial and management experience in Young and Co - long supporters of the Academy and its predecessor College - would bring useful expertise to that committee. *(Reminder note added by DW: The FRC is not a sub-committee of the Executive Board but reports to Lord Ashcroft's Trustee Board, from which it has direct delegated powers)*

The Board congratulated TBO on his son Craig's recent 1st class Honours degree in Geography from Durham University. Craig is a former student of the Academy.

4. Trip approval: Year 8 and 9 STEAM trip to Brussels

DMI thanked PED for scrutinising the risk assessment for the forthcoming school trip to Berlin on behalf of the Executive Board. DMI added that the Academy wished to run the Brussels trip again in 2019-20. PED volunteered to review the risk assessment for the Brussels trip and the Board agreed that if the risk assessment and associated paperwork appeared to present no problems, the trip could go ahead.

5. Principal's Report

DMI drew colleagues' attention to the fact that there is a huge number of events running towards the end of the academic year, which demonstrates that the Academy is not slowing down in the run up to the summer break. DMI shared with colleagues that a team from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had visited the Academy over the last week to provide mock interviews to our Year 10 students. The DWP were very complimentary and commented on the students' manners, their preparation and professionalism. DMI also reported that the Academy held a university fair for Year 12 and Year 10 students.

In the internal appointments section of his report there are notes of a number of internal promotions in the Science department including the promotion of Lisa Armstrong to 2ic and Alex Henry and Jessica Kuzmanoska becoming the KS5 and KS3 coordinators respectively. DW added that Cheryl John would be leaving the Academy at the end of the school year and DW expressed his thanks for her many years of loyal service dating back even before DW's own first involvement with ADT College. DMI told colleagues that she would be returning in a part-time consultancy role. The Board expressed their own wishes to Cheryl for a long and happy retirement.

The Lead Teacher of the Autistic Resource Centre (ARC), Maryann Weatherseed, will also leave the Academy at the end of the academic year. DMI acknowledged the positive impact she had had during her time at the

Academy. An ARC review was taking place during the time of the meeting and DMI intimated that the signs were positive. DMI also discussed the IB results, noting that the results were slightly lower than the previous year but still very positive with a high score of 42. Our IB coordinator Joseph Anson is confident that his marketing campaign this year will produce a larger cohort in 2019-20.

A review of the Year 7 and 8 STEAM programme had been taking place. DMI shared with colleagues that Farah Khan had continued to develop the programme and that there had been an increasing participation in all year groups. This was pleasing and would, next year, complement the new Technology programme described in the report. DMI informed the Board that the annual Arts Week would take place over the final week of term, culminating in *Ashtival*, which will take place the following Thursday. DMI and the Board agreed that Arts Week was a great opportunity for students to engage with the arts.

The Board saw no issues with the accident report or the exclusion list.

DMI presented the MyConcern figures in his report, which were for whole year and for term 5. PHA went into further detail about these figures and the meanings behind some of the very broad categories. DW remarked on the relatively high number of students counted there as dealing with suicidal thoughts and self-harm. The Board agreed that this appeared to be a national issue and that there had been increased media coverage around young people's mental health. PHA gave information about the services available to the Academy that provide support to young people dealing with mental illness and the assistance that is given by the Academy to students who are dealing with mental illness.

6. Current Developments for Discussion

a. ATA Curriculum Update

The Academy had been working to review the curriculum, using Ofsted's draft revised inspection framework as a guide. DMI explained to colleagues that the framework document had not specified a required split between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4b; however, they had suggested that the favoured model would be a 3-year Key Stage 3 and a 2-year Key Stage 4, something that the Academy does not currently run. Ofsted recommended this split because they fear students would not experience a broad curriculum through a shorter KS3. DMI had spoken with people linked with Ofsted about the Academy's current curriculum and they felt it was broad, balanced and justified. DMI believes that the current curriculum offers students the best opportunity to succeed; however, DMI is keen to read future Ofsted reports to ascertain more about the curriculum split and Ofsted's comments in this area. DMI is keen to start a curriculum group, to include members of the Board, in order to discuss this in further detail, as Ofsted will also want to speak with Board members during each inspection. PED had agreed to be part of this.

b. Proposed Offensive Weapons Protocol by Wandsworth

DMI had met with Andy Hough, the Head of Inclusion for Wandsworth to discuss the proposed offensive weapons protocol which Andy had hoped that all Wandsworth schools would sign up to. In that meeting DMI expressed concern at some of the content and proposed practices in the draft document which advocated a degree of leniency in various circumstances where school pupils may be found in possession of offensive weapons. DMI presented to the Board figures on knife crime in the national and local context and the fact that there had been an increase in the number of attacks and deaths caused by knives in London, with the number of attacks at the highest since records began. DMI noted that it was a complex issue with a number of factors contributing to the increase, including cuts to funding for high-needs students, as well as a reduction in the number of police officers due to funding cuts in this service too and a further curtailing of their powers. 70% of people who are stabbed are done so with their own knife. The most dangerous time for children is after school and knife crime has affected two students in the Academy directly, whose older siblings have been stabbed and killed. ATA has permanently excluded one student for carrying a knife this academic year. The knife was discovered during an intelligence-led phone search. PHA has created an 'at risk' register to help protect students we believe may be vulnerable to gang-related and knife-related activities, ICAS staff have good relationships with a number of the 'at risk' students and they are able to seek information and protect them. DMI questioned the accuracy of some statements in Wandsworth's draft protocol as in one section of

the document it had stated that carrying a knife was not illegal. DMI showed the Board the law that forbids carrying a knife in public.

Ofsted produced a report in March 2019 on knife crime and noted that it is a societal problem that cannot be tackled by schools alone, that schools can only do so much and that a school's first priority should be to ensure that all children are safe when on the school site. That report also suggests that where a zero tolerance approach to bladed objects is taken, there is success in preventing knives being brought in school. Continuing this was overwhelmingly DMI and his senior staff's preference at ATA. He informed the Board of the anti-knife crime education that is given to students in assemblies and CPSE. DMI added that the Academy works collaboratively and productively with other agencies to raise awareness, deter and support.

DMI highlighted the large number of vulnerable students at the Academy, who he is seeking to protect. DMI also considered the student and staff recruitment issues that could arise were the Academy not to maintain a tough stance on this issue. He noted that the police response to previous calls about students with weapons had not been particularly productive so school action and sanctions formed the first line of action with probable outcome well-advertised to all. DMI therefore concluded that he wishes to continue to adopt a tough approach to offensive weapons carrying for the benefit of all staff and students.

The Academy have engaged a group affiliated with the Wandsworth Youth Offending Team (YOT) to work with the most 'at risk' students and to deliver assemblies for all year groups.

DMI asked for the Board's endorsement not to adopt the protocol and for him to write a response confirming this with Wandsworth. The Board agreed that the Academy should not sign up to the protocol and supported DMI in taking a firm line against it. DMI commented that he knew a number of other local schools were unhappy with the suggested protocol but was uncertain how many would resist it at the end of the day.

7. Vice-Principal's Report

RJP updated the board on the building development plans that are crucial to cater for the increase in student numbers. RJP had written in his report that no work would now take place until Easter 2020 at the earliest. RJP also reported that, having originally quoted a sum that was significantly over budget, the appointed main contractor was instructed to reduce their proposed costs by Wandsworth (who are the client for the contract). The same contractor will oversee all four of the secondary school developments in Wandsworth that form part of the borough-wide expansion programme of school premises to accommodate an increase in student numbers. RJP expressed his frustration at the delay, as he had hoped that some work would have been undertaken during the 2019 summer break. RJP confirmed that no planning permission would be needed for the identified works.

RJP reminded the Committee that the Academy remained likely to incur a deficit in the region of a £100,000 for the 2018/19 year, in line with RJP's previous estimation.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DW commented that the Academy had received an anonymous complaint, which had been sent by the complainant direct to Ofsted and he had been required to respond on the matter. The complaint centred around ICAS and students being "named and shamed" in Assemblies. DW and DMI had discussed this and agreed that students would not be singled out in such a manner.

Signed: _____

Richard Whitcutt

Chair of Executive Board

Date: 16 / Oct / 2019

