

AAS LOCAL COMMITTEE IMPACT STATEMENT 2023/24

Dear parent/carers

As members of Astrea Academy Sheffield Local Governance Committee, we are keen to take this opportunity to celebrate another year in the school's growth, development, and success. As part of the Astrea Academy Trust, the academy has a dedicated local committee which meets six times a year. You can find out more about us and our work on the school's website.

Astrea Academy Trust was recognised as *"a strong and improving trust"* in its summary evaluation by OFSTED in July 2023 and AAS has moved forward positively since OFSTED's rating of GOOD in November 2022. The academy achieved a very good set of GCSE results (top in the Trust academies in South Yorkshire in terms of progress and attainment) in summer 2023 and opened the first academic 6th form in the north of Sheffield in September 2023.

The local committee has a range of responsibilities:

To ensure that the vision, ethos, and strategic direction of the Astrea Trust is maintained within each school.

The work of the local committee, the academy and the Trust starts and ends with a universal belief in high standards and expectations for every child, no matter what barriers they may face. The vision is one in which all Astrea scholars will learn, thrive, and lead successful lives. Working together, Astrea schools tackle the barriers that stand in the way of young people's success, through a commitment to a brilliant education, a focus on inclusion for all, and by delivering on the promise of opportunities that inspire beyond measure. Our committee works hard to support the academy in delivering this vision.

Committee chairs receive regular updates from the Trust's CEO on developments within the Trust, which are cascaded down to committee members. The chair liaises with the co-principals and clerk to draw up agendas for meetings, responding to issues highlighted in the Astrea Trust's 2025 strategic plan and Trust priorities for the year, focusing on key issues such as a knowledge-rich curriculum; excellence in teaching; behaviours for learning; excellent professional practice underpinned by research; and staff and student well-being. The co-principals, (David Boyd and Rachel Flemming), along with other members of the senior leadership teams, have reported on these areas throughout the year and have been challenged by members through questioning at meetings and during academy visits. In addition, SLT provide the committee with high quality presentations at meetings on themes such as Safeguarding, SEND, Personal Development, Community Engagement, 6th Form and data which also give members an opportunity to learn, question and challenge.

Members of the committee have different responsibilities (for example, Safeguarding, SEND, Grants, Behaviour and Attendance, Quality of Education and Careers) and link with key members of school staff so that they learn about policy and procedure as well as seeing staff and scholars in action during visits. These regular visits ensure that the committee understands all facets of academy life and can therefore support and challenge the school in making its vision a reality.

Committee members support the school in ensuring that high standards of behaviour are upheld. We work to make sure that the academy uses its sanctions appropriately by chairing and attending exclusion review panels and questioning actions in the suspension reduction plan during meetings.

In addition, online governance training is available to committee members from the Trust and The National College so that we can extend our knowledge and increase understanding around key

issues such as the role of being a committee member, safeguarding, cyber security, careers and preparation for Ofsted. Committee members have benefitted from this training during the year.

The leadership team shares the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plans (including any recommendations post-inspection) with the committee and welcomes questions on its aims, formulation and progress towards objectives. The LGC plays an important part in helping ensure the delivery of robust and well-considered strategies in accordance with Trust across both phases as well as offering a constructive platform where processes and procedures are discussed and scrutinised.

The Chair also keeps in touch with the co-principals between meetings to ensure support is provided as well as giving an opportunity to catch up on successes, challenges, and any other issues.

To hold school leaders to account for the educational performance of the school, the inclusion of all pupils and the offer of a knowledge-rich and broadly-based curriculum.

Members of the LGC have visited the academy during the year, focusing on different aspects of school life such as the academic and pastoral provision in 6th form, and SEND and careers provision through both phases. They get to know how the academy works on a day-to-day basis - including lining up on the MUGA, Morning Meetings, entering and exiting lessons, conduct on the corridors and arrangements at lunchtime. Members have also had the opportunity to meet with the staff in the primary phase and the scholar council in the secondary phase, sample delicious school dinners, and see scholars take part in competitions such as Speak Out and Poetry By Heart. Using evidence from these visits which involve observing lessons and meeting with link staff and scholars, the committee challenges leaders on the provision of an accessible curriculum for all, focussing specifically on groups such as SEND or those targeted by pupil premium grants, to ensure the best possible outcomes for AAS scholars whatever their need or ability. These questions and answers are recorded in the minutes of each meeting.

The committee is aware of this year's highlights:

- Road Closure to ensure safe arrival and exit of all scholars across the academy.
- Attainment in English at GCSE - the highest in the Trust.
- Successful opening of an academic 6th form with a small cohort of 16 students who "study where what you do is what you do best" and an extensive range of wider opportunities.
- Introduction of a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular trips for scholars of all ages, ranging from tours on foot and by public transport in the local community to overnight residencies for the primary phase and a MFL trip to Spain for secondary scholars.
- Popular rewards events for scholars doing the right thing – F1 VR experience, being a favourite!
- A wide range of events involving scholars as well as their parents/carers in some cases - winter and summer fairs, choir performances and presentation assemblies, awards ceremonies, competitions, Culture Day, Scholar showcase, Y11 Prom and HAF holiday programme.
- A much-improved picture of attainment in the primary phase – in Y1 phonics, GLD in EYFS and Y4 Multiplication Tables check.
- Establishment of roles in scholar leadership opportunities in the secondary phase on scholar council or as ambassador roles in sports, wellbeing and computing. There are also opportunities for leadership in the primary phase.
- Trust centralised curriculum for Personal Development for secondary meeting statutory requirements is now in place with its focus on 4 key strands (Personal, Social, Health and

Citizenship education) and a drive on careers. PSHE is embedded in the primary phase through play.

- Further development of a well-supported community engagement programme for parents/carers including a variety of activities such as parental workshops (bedtime story proving very popular), curriculum focused meetings, coffee mornings, ESOL sessions and Women's Wellness.
- The formation of the Community Advisory Group which offers voice and opinions and contributes to events.
- Productive links with local groups to support families in the community such as Reach Up Youth, Community Youth Team and Family Intervention Centre.
- Positive links with local mosques to enhance the academy's understanding of its scholars and their families.

As the academy grows and changes, so does the make-up of our committee. We have been fortunate this year to have had a representative from Trust alongside a staff member who represents both phases, and a recruit from the local community. As the academy becomes more established, so the committee is becoming much more reflective of the community around it. We are a group of likeminded individuals, from a range of skills and backgrounds, who have a common overriding interest in wanting to support the school in delivering the very best education and opportunities to every scholar.

To support inclusion at school, members of the committee work with link members of staff to address issues around SEND, attendance and safeguarding.

To work with the school's leadership and central team to ensure that high standards of safeguarding are maintained.

As well as reading Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1 and Annex A), all committee members have completed Safeguarding for School Governors along with a module on Cyber Security.

The committee has received detailed and informative presentations from the primary and secondary DSLs this year and safeguarding data is presented at every meeting where processes are discussed, questioned, and clarified, enabling members to build a picture of strengths and concerns. The committee is aware that safeguarding is a main priority at AAS and significant staffing resources and focus is placed on the responsibility of keeping children safe. The link member for safeguarding keeps in touch with DSLs from both phases and feedback from the Trust's Head of Safeguarding following the annual audit, stated that it was a 'very positive review which evidenced a strong culture of safeguarding'.

To promote positive parent, community and stakeholder engagement and to drive school-to-school partnerships for improvement within the Trust.

We are fortunate to have three parent members on the committee who represent both phases and the local community. They have been instrumental in keeping the academy and the committee in touch with views, concerns and feedback from the local community, helping the academy to address ongoing issues and support improvement of all outward processes.

Committee members have been involved in a range of successful new events run by the academy this year for the benefit of families within the local community such as coffee mornings, visitors' events, parental workshops and a well-supported HAF programme.

The chair has also been able to recommend links with local business and industry to provide wider experiences and opportunities for AAS scholars.

To identify, understand and report to Trustees any strategic risks facing the school.

The committee is fully aware of the strengths AAS has in terms of its site and facilities and recognises significant work that has been done this year in terms of community engagement. The committee sees that the academy is run by committed, professional staff who enjoy rewarding relationships with colleagues and scholars. The academy has a fair behaviour policy which is consistently applied, a clear work ethic which fiercely protects every scholar's right to learn, and scholars who enjoy their learning and have high aspirations. In addition, the committee sees that a high level of care and pastoral support is provided to the academy's most vulnerable scholars and their families. Communication with parents/carers is an area that is continually undergoing improvement to ensure all families involved with the school understand its ethos and receive key messages and essential information through whatever means of communication works best.

Committee members are made aware of risks for AAS either via the co- principals' reports in meetings, through visits to the academy, or in discussion with staff and parents. Some issues which have emerged this year and been passed on to the Trust are the concerns around the implementation of Trust behaviour policy, the challenging needs of some of the younger scholars in the primary phase, emerging trends related to mental health concerns and anxiety around safety in the community. Attendance across the academy is an improving picture, particularly in the primary phase. Progress has been made with punctuality too. It is, however, still work in progress as the rate of suspensions remains too high although an increase in the number of scholars doing the right thing is apparent and is being rewarded.

This year has been another one of challenge and change, but committee members are proud of the enthusiasm, dedication and hard work shown by all members of the school community to ensure AAS is a "good" provider, not only in terms of the education it provides, but also the remarkable level of wider support shown to scholars and their families. We move on to September in a stable position with two permanent co-principals in post to take on the next phase in the academy's development with its first Y6 and Y13 scholars in 2024/25.

We would like to thank all the scholars, families, staff and other local stakeholders for their continuing support for Astrea Academy Sheffield and look forward to continuing our work with the school next academic year.

As chair of AAS LGC, I am stepping down at the end of the summer term. I have been on the committee for six years and have seen the academy through opening its doors for the first time in the primary building, through COVID and the move to online education, through its first inspection and on to the opening of the 6th form. It has been a tremendous journey and an absolute pleasure to work with everyone in the AAS community. I wish you all the very best for the future.