

AQUINAS COLLEGE
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Date: 16 June 2015
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Ms H Delahan, Mr B Hickey, Mr A Martin, Fr P Munroe, Dr A Smith and Mr D Pearson.

Dr P Beatty in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr T McGee.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2015 copies of which had been circulated previously be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered on the Agenda.

5. LINEAR A LEVELS POST ELECTION

Mr Pearson gave an update on how linear A levels will be implemented. The changes will begin in September 2015 and will be fully functional, for new students by September 2017. This means that that from 2015 to 2018 there will be a two tier A Level system. Between September 2015 and July 2018 some students might be doing all linear A Levels, some might do all modular A Levels and some (probably most) will do a combination of the two.

Initially there will be 13 linear A levels, some current A levels i.e. communication studies, performing arts, applied business studies and leisure studies may not become linear A levels. Applied business studies could become part of a new general applied course or possibly a BTEC course.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that examinations boards were starting to give details of the cost of sitting linear A levels. A discussion took place on students taking an AS at the end of year 1. The college would need to cost the examination entry at the end of year 1, along with invigilation costs. Mr Martin asked if the AS could be ignored and go ahead as planned to the A level. Mr Pearson confirmed that was the case and that a student could opt for completing the A level without doing the AS. In the future the college may offer AS in the popular subjects which would be equivalent to 40% of an A level but it would not contribute to an A level qualification.

Governors noted that there would be different practices in different institutions. Mr Pearson advised Governors that admissions tutors would look at a student's GCSE results and predicted grades when making offers for university entrance.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that some universities were making unconditional offers to students based on AS results providing they put it down as their first choice. The universities involved included Birmingham, Nottingham.

Governors noted that about 10% of colleges would be teaching A levels in a linear fashion whilst most were doing the same as the college and offering a mix.

6. CHANGES TO ASSURING QUALITY

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the system for assuring quality has been in place for 4 years. He felt that now was the time to review the system particularly now that the Assistant Principal (Quality) had left the college.

Section Heads have been working with departments in bringing about change and it was felt that the focus should concentrate on teaching, learning and training. More resources will be committed to improving classroom practice. Section Heads provide an external view across departments by providing challenge and support. The changes to the structure are at a transitional stage and once the structure has been completed it will be circulated to governors. It was agreed that further discussion would take place at the next meeting of the committee.

Dr Beatty asked if there was anything in particular that governors should be looking for. Mr Pearson said that the key factors were quality of assessment, achievement levels and the direction of travel for department grades are they up or down?

In addition the introduction of performance related pay means that staff will be measured against a certain standard. Staff are often resistant to change. Ms Delahan felt that staff who felt that they were under pressure respond better if they are part of a team rather than on their own.

7. NEW INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the new framework for inspections had only been received on 15 June 2015. It had been anticipated that the document would have been published in early June 2015. The document was entitled Future of Education Inspections – Further Education and Skills. The changes will come into effect from September 2015.

A brief discussion took place on when the college may be inspected. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college will probably be inspected in 2 years time. Ms Delehan asked what time of the year would the inspection take place. Mr Pearson indicated that the inspection of sixth form colleges is usually at the start of the academic year. The new framework would give the college 2 days notice of a 2 day inspection.

It was agreed that in view of the fact the document had only just been received further discussion be deferred to the next meeting of the committee.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Pearson advised Governors that Mr Moore had indicated that he was considering retiring at the end of the next academic year. He was considering his position and it was anticipated that by the Governing Body meeting on 23 June 2015 it would be clear what Mr Moore's intentions were. Mr Pearson advised Governors that he felt there was a need to replace at Vice Principal level and that the successful candidate would need to be a practicing Catholic. Once Mr Moore has indicated when he will retire the Governors will need draw up a timeline for recruiting a replacement and appoint an Appointments Panel. Mr Pearson indicated that he would like the new Vice Principal to start in January 2016 or Easter 2016 at the latest to provide an overlap.

The post of Vice Principal would be advertised without any specific skills set. A new senior management structure would then be drawn up once the new Vice Principal had been appointed.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to be held on Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 4.30pm, subject to the Calendar of Meetings being agreed by the Governing Body at its meeting on 23 June 2015.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____