

AQUINAS COLLEGE

TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Date: 9 February 2016
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr P Beatty, Mr B Hickey, Mr A Martin, Cllr T McGee, Dr A Smith and Mr D Pearson.

In attendance: Mr S King - Item 5 only

Cllr T McGee in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Ms H Delahan and Fr P Munroe.

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.

3. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 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

i) Minute 5 - Results Overview

Mr Pearson advised Governors that as a result of the English Language papers being remarked 31 had been increased by at least one grade and some by two grades. The marks had been increased in some cases by as much as thirty. However, some students had already lost their place at a university.

5. QUALITY REVIEW MEETINGS – UPDATE

Mr King circulated a paper that gave details of the grading structure that the college had used when undertaking the quality review of departments. The college had used the Ofsted grading having a + or a – added to the grades. The paper gave details of the gradings for the last 5 years. Governors noted that most of the departments were a grade 2.

Mr Beatty asked with the introduction of Linear A levels will the extra bits that the college offers fall away and will the enrichment be provided by external people. Mr Pearson replied by saying that enrichment is not included in the funding that the college receives. All staff are expected to provide something outside of the classroom. The college could, if required, in the future pay for instructors to protect the enrichment that is offered. He added that DBS checks would be needed for any outside instructors.

A discussion took place on the gradings of departments and the subject areas that were of concern to the college. Mr King outlined what the area of concern was for those departments and subjects along with the strategy that the college was using to improve the results and performance in those areas. It was noted that Product Design would not have any examination at the end of the course instead there would be practical assessments.

Mr King advised Governors how the Section Head Strategy was used within the college. The main points were as follows:

- i) A Section Head oversees a group of departments
- ii) Main targets /strategies agreed, bespoke monitoring/support by Section Head
- iii) New focus/additional support for “Blue” Alps subjects
- iv) Regular class performance analysis (of student predicted results)
- v) New mid term quality review meetings in January with Mr Pearson
- vi) Introduction of new performance management process from 2016

Cllr McGee said it was important that the student is on the right course for them.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there were some management issues in getting consistency across all department with particular reference to monitoring performance or teaching and learning assessment.

Dr Smith asked if Head of Departments get some remission. Mr Pearson replied that they do get a small amount of remission and added that Heads of Departments are good teachers.

Mr Hickey sought clarification on the management structure of large departments. Mr Pearson replied that in most departments there would be a head of department and a head of subject. A section head would cover several departments.

Mr King was thanked for his informative report.

6. CURRICULUM ISSUES

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there were pressures on staff to provided good grades. He added that most departments do a good job. The role of Section Head is unpopular but they do a very good job within the college.

Mr Hickey asked how is a person appointed to the role of section head. Mr Pearson replied that they are high performing teachers within the college and go through a rigorous selection process. There are more than 20 departments within the college and they vary in size. The turnover in staff is low.

It was agreed that at a future meeting a section head would be asked to attend so that Governors can have a better understanding of how the role works.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that within three years all A levels would be linear. Starting in September 2015 there are 14 subjects, in 2016 there will be a further 10 subjects and in 2017 the remainder would come on stream. The examination boards are still considering what do about the unpopular subjects.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that would be no new curricular development next year.

A discussion took place on photography and Mr Pearson advised Governors that there had been one class and the interest in the subject was lower than expected.

There had been a problem in Art and design. A new moderator had been assigned to the subject and knocked the marks down, another moderator was asked to look at the marks and as a result the marks went down further. The students had been coached in a particular style. This led to the college complaining to the Board. As a result additional support will be provided by AQA Examination Board this year.

Dr Smith asked which subject would not exist in the future. Mr Pearson replied that there are ten subjects with less than 1500 students across the country taking that subject and he provided the following information:

- i) Communication Studies would cease to exist
- ii) Environmental Studies was staying
- iii) Leisure Studies would cease to exist
- iv) Applied Business would cease to exist
- v) Japanese may cease to exist

Cllr McGee asked if a subject was going could the teacher(s) be transferred to teach another subject? Mr Pearson replied it would depend on the subjects involved and the individual teacher.

In response to a question Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Philosophy results are notoriously disappointing as both staff and students work extremely hard but do not seem to get the results they deserve. This subject will be reviewed if it does not improve this year.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that it would be important for students to start and stay on three subjects. There will be a need to check staffing levels.

Dr Smith asked had the position of A* been resolved? Mr Pearson replied that it was yet to be finalised.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14 June 2016 at 4.30pm

Signed _____

Date _____