

AQUINAS COLLEGE
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Date: 6 October 2020
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: Virtual

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr R Harris, Mr G Hynes, Mr A Martin, Miss E Shuttlewood, Dr A Smith, Mr M Taylor and Mr D Pearson.

In attendance:

Miss C Phillips (Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality)

Dr A Smith in the Chair.

Dr Smith welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the academic year and referred to the complex issues that the college was facing as a result of Covid 19.

1. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Dr Smith.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Miss A Aspacio,

3. 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.

4. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 copies of which had been circulated previously were approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record, subject to Minute 7 second paragraph reading that instead of hat.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered by the agenda for the meeting.

6. IMPACT OF COVID 19

Mr Pearson introduced a paper that had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. The papers outlined the arrangements that the college had made to ensure that students had access to a full high quality programme of study. Lessons were delivered in the normal fashion but with half the group present and half remoting in so that social distancing could be maintained in classrooms. The aim was to make it as close as possible to normal. All classes were split into 2 streams. Whilst one stream attends college for a full week the other stream will be joining the class remotely.

So whilst one stream is present for 1 week the other stream remotes in or works at home and the following week they do the opposite. This requires students to be in the same stream for each of their 3 subjects, or 4 for those who start on 4 subjects.

Mr Pearson added that this model has the benefit of getting students into routines and can be very simply expanded to 100% occupation or fully remote learning i.e. 0% occupation. It can also be successfully adapted if students or staff have to isolate. Students don't lose lessons due to travel time and get set in routines. Staff have trialled this way of working with great success and positive feedback from students. Class microphones have been ordered to ensure good audio transmission along with Chromebooks should they be needed. A number of core activities take place at the college i.e. ethics, but other core subjects are held remotely and have their attendance checked to monitor engagement.

The arrangements outlined above had started in September 2020 with a longer soft start (induction period) for new students which had allowed all students to be met with a member of staff, face to face. The college had slightly over recruited on student numbers. Mr Pearson added that the DfE are happy with the approach that has been adopted.

Dr Smith asked if students had enough IT equipment. Mr Pearson replied that the college had bought over 200 Chromebooks to lend to students, the demand from L6 students had been lower than anticipated. Those students who had borrowed IT equipment last year had returned it.

Mr Hynes asked had there been any difficulties with students who had received inflated grades at GCSE. Mr Pearson replied that any student that was close to the entry requirement of a course had met with staff. Some students had been placed on 4 rather than 3 subjects to allow them select the most appropriate course after they had experienced it.

Dr Smith asked if the entire college had been split and were the groups uneven. Mr Pearson replied that there had not been a problem and that every class was balanced because of the size of the cohorts at around 12. There had been relatively few complaints from students. Miss Shuttlewood added that from a student's perspective it had worked well and that everyone felt safe in the college. Mr Harris added that there had been some advantages with students working intensively for a week then having work to research, he felt that it was very positive. Mr Taylor asked Miss Shuttlewood had there been any concerns regarding transport to the college. She replied that students had been fine on the buses. Dr Smith added that the train from High Peak usually emptied at Davenport Station. Mr Pearson advised Governors that Greater Manchester Transport (GMT) had received extra monies to put on additional buses where it was needed. Students were reminded of the need to wear masks on public transport and no problems had been reported.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that both staff and students had learnt how to manage things differently.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that that there had been 2 cases of students with Covid 19 and that they were working at home. The college had contacted the DfE, LA and Public Health and track and trace. A member of the PGCE group in college had tested positive, so all the PGCE students in that bubble were self-isolating. The college had seating plans for all classes and students were seated a metre apart. A number of students were self-isolating due to Covid 19, the maximum number had been 67. Students who were self-isolating had been asked to access remote learning.

7. RESULTS OVERVIEW

Mr Pearson introduced two papers that had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. The papers covered the following areas:

a) Exam Analysis

The paper gave the background on how students had received their results. The college had to award a Centre Assessed Grade (CAGs). The college went through a detailed process to assess “the most likely grade a student would achieve had the exam series not been cancelled”. The college was asked to consider prior attainment and a three year trend together with the most appropriate evidence from assessments prior to lockdown.

The college went through a rigorous and challenging process to produce CAGs for every student entry in the summer exams. These were moderated in order to try and get the most accurate and fair outcome in line with the guidance provided. Taking an objective approach and overview of the CAG, outcomes were higher than any previous college outcomes. The overwhelming majority of students received the grade they were awarded by the college and although all grades from A* to U were awarded the overall performance was higher by about 20% than in previous years.

b) ALPS Provider Report for the college

Mr Pearson drew Governors’ attention to the following:

- i) LPS A level – Strategic Overview for 2019/2020
- ii) LPS A level – Raw results by subject for 2020
- iii) LPS A level – Analysis of students banded by prior attainment – Current year
- iv) LPS A level – Analysis of students banded by prior attainment – 4 year summary
- v) LPS A level – Quality Indicator
- vi) LPS A level – Subject value added overview for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020
- vii) LPS A level – Quality of teaching and learning measurement
- viii) LPS A level - Tscore

Mr Pearson advised Governors that:

- a) not a single subject was in blue i.e. a cause for concern.
- b) the BTEC results had been outstanding.
- b) many students have deferred their university place, more information will be given in a report to the committee on Student Destinations.
- c) as a result of b) above other students had taken up places

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for the informative reports and Dr Smith added that the college was coping well under difficult circumstances.

8. COLLEGE FOCUS 2020/2021

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had been working hard to ensure that students had a good learning experience. In addition the health and welfare of both staff and students was important.

Students were currently taking mock examinations and they had realised that the result may be taken into account if the college has to make further centre assessments. The college were waiting to see what will happen in relation to examinations in the summer 2021 and would need to prepare once the outcome was known. Mr Martin asked if there would be examination in summer 2021. Mr Pearson replied that decision from the DfE was expected soon.

Mr Pearson reported that whilst the majority of schools had returned to full occupancy this had not been an option for the college due to the size and complexity of the curriculum.

9. SECTION 48 INSPECTION

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Catholic Education Service (CES) had tried to draw up a national framework to cover all schools and colleges i.e. from early years to KS5. The framework had been completed to cover up to KS3. The CES is hoping to have the national framework in place by Easter 2021 and then there will then be a year's training for inspectors. Therefore, it is unlikely that an inspection will take place next year.

Shrewsbury Diocese has suspended all Section 48 Inspections. Mr Pearson advised Governors that 2 North West Colleges had been subject to an Ofsted inspection.

10. CURRICULUM ISSUES

Mr Pearson advised Governors that

i) Catherine Phillips (Assistant Principal) would in future take a lead on Curriculum matters.

ii) There were no new courses for 2020/2021

iii) T levels are now fully vocational and that the college will not be offering them.

iv) The last new course to be offered was Criminology which has proved to be very successful with 233 students in L6 and 141 students in U6.

v) The normal Quality Review meetings will not take place but there will be meetings to offer support to subject areas.

vi) Staff will be asked to update the Quality Improvement Plan and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Smith referred to the September Accounts for the college that had just been issued to Governors and noted that the pressure areas were adult education and the canteen. Mr Pearson replied that one or two courses had been dropped in adult education and that in the canteen it was difficult to maintain social distancing. However, the college would continue to offer a canteen service to students although there were only about one third of the students in college at any one time.

The Governors asked Mr Pearson to convey their congratulations to staff on how well the college was managing under very difficult circumstances.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2 February 2021 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____