

AQUINAS COLLEGE
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Date: 7 February 2023

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Mr R Harris, Mr B Hickey, Mr G Hynes, Mr A Martin, Dr A Smith and Mr D Pearson.

In attendance: Mr A Bailey Vice Principal
Ms C Phillips (Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality)

Dr A Smith in the Chair.

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 Mr M Taylor.

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 October 2022 copies of which had been circulated previously were approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record subject to Minute 7 (page 4, 4th paragraph) sad to read said.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Results Overview – Minute 6

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the APLS Value had been rebased as was now 3 instead of a 2 which reflects performance of the top 25% bot 10% nationally.

6. DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Diocese had informed him that the college would would not have a Denominational Inspection in the current academic year. The Diocese are behind with training inspectors. A Denominational Inspection will take place within six months of an Ofsted inspection. The college could have an Ofsted inspection at any time now, the college was last inspected in 2017.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that in his discussions with the Diocese the fact that a new Chaplain has recently been appointed and that the HOD of RE had been on maternity leave were also factors that had been considered by the Diocese when

determining when a Denominational Inspection would take place. The college were undertaking a self inspection audit in preparation for an inspection.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that Sir John Dean College, Loreto and Xaverian had already had an Ofsted inspection and Cardinal Newman was due to be inspected this week. Mr Hynes asked how many were involved in an inspection. Mr Pearson replied that there is usually a team of six inspectors who have specific skills in relation to the college that is being inspected. The format of the report is the same as that in 2017. Governors acknowledged that they had received the email from the Chair of Governors in relation to the impending Ofsted inspection.

Mr Pearson agreed to provide information to Governors on what they could expect during the inspection. Ms Phillips added that the college will get a week's notice of the inspection. A telephone call could be received on a Monday with the inspectors undertaking a "deep dive" in to subjects on Friday with the inspection starting on the following Monday.

Mr Hickey and Mr Bailey joined the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

7. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SAR AND QUALITY REVIEW MEETINGS UPDATES

Ms Phillips introduces the Self Assessment Report for 2021/2022 that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The report covered the following areas:

a) Introduction and Context

The college's commitment to the Gospel values of freedom, just and peace was outlined. The college values each member of its community, recognising the dignity and unique nature of each individual. The college is not academically selective, it draws its students from its four Catholic partner schools and from many others schools in Stockport.

The college offers 50 subjects at Level 3 with all students undertaking a core studies programme. The majority of students follow A level courses, with a significant number of students now on mixed study programmes with vocational level 3 courses. A number of students re-sit GCSEs and study for a level 2 programme. In addition the Pathways Department for students with learning difficulties offers Entry Level and Level 1 courses to students.

b) Progress Since the last Inspection (January 2017)

The college has responded to the next steps recommendations in the last inspection and there has been significant improvement in 2022 since the last set of examination outcomes in 2019.

The value added and high grade outcomes for 2022 which improved by 20% in A level subjects since the last set of examined outcome in 2019 illustrates the changes that have been made to Learning, Teaching and Assessment, through establishing Guiding Principle for LTA. The college has an approach to learning, inside and outside the

classroom that enables students of all abilities, including the most able, to develop and extend their skills and knowledge and make the progress of which they are capable.

The Quality Improvement Plan for 2022/2023 is focussed on the consolidation of the approaches where the college has seen evidence of positive impact on student progress, alongside group of learners, skills, the embedding of new Vocational RQF qualifications and staff wellbeing.

Since 2017 the college has:

- i) set a clear direction for Learning, Teaching and Assessment, with agreed expectations for approaches to and the quality of student learning, underpinned by educational research.
- ii) The college has revised its approach to CPD and its alignment to the curriculum.
- iii) In addition the approach to quality assurance and improvement aims to empower teachers and departments to own their pedagogy with confidence and to be informed by educational research, through the Review of Learning cycle.
- iv) Changes have been made in the management, staffing and/or specifications in a number of curriculum departments to support more rapid progress in the improvement of outcomes. (Economics, Maths, Physics and Business Studies). Based on the evaluation of 2022 outcomes, the vast majority of persistent areas of underperformance have moved on.
- v) Developed a process for checking the content of visiting speakers' presentations.
- vi) Strengthened Governor scrutiny and challenge for curriculum performance by establishing a Teaching and Learning Committee. There are also designated Governors for pastoral care, safeguarding and careers.
- vi) Supported information sharing from schools regarding students in need of additional support and appointed a lead for the transition of students from secondary schools.

c) Response to Covid.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that during the pandemic the college made some strategic decisions about how to support students academically and pastorally which prioritised their safety without affecting their outcomes and ability to access their first choice destination. The college has tried to adapt its practices post pandemic to embed some of the strategies that were effective and helpful the college to evolve not only pedagogy in the classroom, but pastoral systems. The following were introduced during Covid and have been retained or further developed:

- i) Use of Google educational platform including Google Classroom, Drive and Meet
- ii) Departmental subject pages – focussing on metacognition, stretch and challenge and super-curriculum.
- iii) Weekly engagement screens recording effort in all subjects – staff complete these for each class they teach.
- iv) A new pastoral system – The Thrive Model- linked to tracking engagement and focussing on ensuring students are supported by the most appropriate staff and services in college.
- v) Changed focus of personal tutor role to one of a coach, prioritised 1:1 sessions with students highlighted for intervention by engagement screens and thrive cases.
- vi) A focus on wellbeing for both staff and students – regular pulse surveys are completed and discussed by SLT. There is now a team of Student Wellbeing mentors to support the college's counselling provision.

- vii) Renewed focus on enrichment linked to personal development and wellbeing.
- viii) Remodelled the college timetable to better support student progress and catch up.
- ix) All safeguarding students receive wellbeing checks on a weekly basis during remote learning and these have been carried on with vulnerable students receiving wellbeing calls during holidays.
- x) Appointed academic skills mentors to assist with Covid catch up – targeted widening participation students and other vulnerable characteristics.

Mr Harris advised Governors that Heads of Departments are engaged in the process and are taking ownership.

Mr Hickey asked how were BTECs fairing. Mr Pearson replied that a BTEC distinction equals A* but added that value added is a challenge. He added that one subject at risk is BTEC performance. Music A level has small numbers and is a tough A level. Mr Harris added that due to the small number of students if one underperforms it has a greater impact.

Dr Beatty asked if a student takes Further Maths do they have four subjects and therefore may fall off. Mr Pearson replied that there are only small numbers taking Further Maths and Statistics. Statistics presents its own problems because there are no past papers and resources are scarce. Mr Pearson added that the college is focussed on a review of learning. There is a push from Government for students to do maths up to the age of eighteen.

Mr Hickey felt that whilst having a narrative is important it is what is happening in the classroom that really matters. Mr Bailey advised Governors that learning walks had been undertaken. Dr Smith added that the college has 67% of A level students across the Borough of Stockport. Mr Hynes asked if the SAR was published on parent portal. Mr Pearson replied that it was not on parent portal.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the Quality Review meetings had returned to a more formal process but had retained its focus on learning and the outcomes for students. She added that 43% of subjects were grade 1, 87% Grade 1 or 2, 11% were grade 3 and 2% grade 4. Mr Hickey asked is the size of the cohort an issue e.g. in Music. Ms Phillips replied that other colleges have a better reputation in Music.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that Year 10 taster days had been re-introduced. Mr Pearson added that the taster days would cover STEM, EFL and Sport. Music had moved to music technology, with a BTEC, students were interested in music but not classical music. Mr Hynes added that the teaching in secondary schools was very mixed.

The Governors thanked Mr. Pearson and Ms. Phillips for their comprehensive reports.

8. CURRICULUM ISSUES

Mr Pearson circulated a paper that gave a quick guide to the future of post 16 level 3 vocational qualifications in England. He advised Governors That BTECs can continue to be taught in 2023/2024 and very few qualifications will be affected in 2024/2025. The college has around 25% of its courses on BTEC qualifications. All BTECs have had to be re-appraised and now have some examinable work.

There are three routes to vocational qualifications a) Technical b) Academic and c) Alternative Academic Qualification. The college does not offer any Technical qualifications.

The paper detailed the key activity timelines for the changes starting in September 2024. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the SFCA was trying to get the Government to change its mind. He felt that the best that could be hoped for was a delay in implementation of the changes. The college has ten vocational courses that are high performing and popular. The most popular is criminology and it cannot be taken as an A level. The Welsh Examination Board offers criminology and has not yet drawn up an A level specification. Mr Pearson added that the most important thing is to ensure that students are on the right course for them.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that Stockport College and Cheadle and Marple College are now part of the Trafford Group of Colleges. They are likely to look at rationalisation of courses on different sites. The Marple site will offer A level and vocational courses, Cheadle site will not offer A level courses but will offer level 2 and below, Stockport College site will not offer A level courses but will offer vocational courses.

Mr Hickey asked what was the funding position for students undertaking a third year of study. Mr Pearson replied that funding is reduced by 80%.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there were three additional items

i) Careers -The college needs to produce a Provider Access Statement for approval at the Governing Body meeting on 21 March 2023 The following Governors agreed to review the Statement: Mr R Harris, Mr G Hynes and Dr A Smith.

ii) Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would on a fortnightly basis issue an update on what to expect during the Ofsted inspection.

iii) It is intended to involve Governors in the review of learning at the college. This will take place on 8 or 15 March 2023 and Governors will be invited once the date and time has been fixed.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13 June 2023 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____