

**AQUINAS COLLEGE**  
**TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 11 June 2024

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

**GOVERNORS PRESENT**

Miss M Braithwaite, Mr B Hickey, Mr G Hynes, Mr Mr A Martin, Mr D Pearson, Dr A Smith and Mr M Taylor.

In attendance:

Mr A Bailey	Vice Principal
Miss C Phillips	Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality
Ms H Donelon	Prospective Foundation Governor
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governors

Dr A Smith in the Chair.

**1. OPENING PRAYER**

The meeting began with a prayer led by Dr Smith.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr R Harris, Miss A Smith and from Ms H Donelon for her late arrival.

**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 6 February 2024 copies of which had been circulated previously were approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record, subject to Minute 7 - Executive Summary of Leadership and Management SAR and Quality Review Meetings Updates, second paragraph, delete last sentence, replace with Updated In Year Progress Review will be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the committee.

**5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

a) Denominational Inspection – Minute 6

Miss Braithwaite asked if there was any news on when the Denominational Inspection would take place. Mr Pearson replied that that the inspection should have taken place this term. However, the Diocese are struggling to get a team of inspectors together. The team would consist of two inspectors from the Diocese and one with sixth form college experience. In addition Damian Cunningham (Director of Schools for the Diocese) has retired and a replacement has not yet been appointed. Mr R Woods (Deputy Director of Schools) is the Acting Director of Schools for the Diocese. The inspection is likely to take place early in the new academic year.

b) Executive Summary of Leadership and Management SAR and Quality Review Meetings Updates - Minute 7

Miss Braithwaite asked if the college had changed examining boards. Mr Bailey replied that the college were looking at the possibility of changing examining boards for certain subjects such as RS, English Literature and Music. Dr Smith added that the college uses different boards for different subjects.

Ms Donelon arrived at this point in the meeting.

## 6. IN YEAR PROGRESS – QUALITY REVIEW

Ms Phillips introduce two papers that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting, i) A spreadsheet that showed the ALPS scores for 2023 for the college compared with the national scores and the predicted grades for the college for 2024 and ii) Key Risks -Rating and Concern Level by Subjects.

Ms Donelon asked what did ALPS stand for. Ms Phillips replied that it was A level Performance, a value added measure and outlined what the various grades were.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the Key for Risk-Rating and Concern Level by Subject was as follows:

- i) Red Subjects about which we have concerns.
- ii) Amber Subjects about which we have some concerns. In some cases, In-Year Assessments and Predicted Grades may show improvement which should have a positive effect on U6 outcomes for 2024.
- iii) Green Subjects where in-year actions appear to be having a positive effect to improve U6 outcomes for 2024.

The position for the subject areas were as follows:

- a) History (100) Some Improvement Predicted
  - Staffing changes, including new teacher, Head of Subject and Head of Department
  - Close monitoring and ISG support
  - Changes to the planning and sequencing of the course
  - Changes to delivery of the NEA timing and assessment
  - Introduction of a targeted referral strategy for High Grades

ALPS Connect May 2024 Prediction	ALPS Summer 2023 Results National	ALPS Summer 2023 Results Client	Predicted 2024 A*/A and High Grades	Summer 2023 A*/A and High Grades
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7	8	7	20% (A*/A) 54% (HG)	11% (A*/A) 39% (HG)
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- b) RS (38) Improvement Predicted  
New Head of Department appointed
- Close monitoring and ISG support
  - Changes to the use of Referral for targeting High Grades

ALPS Connect May 2024 Prediction	ALPS Summer 2023 Results National	ALPS Summer 2023 Results Client	Predicted 2024 A*/A and High Grades	Summer 2023 A*/A and High Grades
5	8	7	24% (A*/A) 61% (HG)	12% (A*/A) 40% (HG)

- c) Statistics (34) Remains a Cause for Concern
- New Head of Department and teacher to the subject appointed
  - ISG 'Emergency Package' of support, monitoring and intervention
  - Targeted referral workshops – support for groups and individuals
  - Cross-college support and intervention for students at-risk of failure

ALPS Connect May 2024 Prediction	ALPS Summer 2023 Results National	ALPS Summer 2023 Results Client	Predicted 2024 A*/A and High Grades	Summer 2023 A*/A and High Grades
7	8	9	6% (A*/A) 26% (HG)	14% (A*/A) 28% (HG)

### **Underperforming Vocational Subjects/Blue ALPS – August 2023**

- d) BTEC Performance Acting (12) Further Decline
- Discontinue from September 2024 with students to enrol on A Level Drama and Theatre Studies
  - Head of Subject returned from Maternity Leave
  - Focus on the new examined component for course, through exam technique and practice
  - Support and intervention for individual students

ALPS Connect May 2024 Prediction	ALPS Summer 2023 Results National	ALPS Summer 2023 Results Client	Predicted 2024 D*/D	Summer 2023 D*/D
8	8	7	8% (HG)	29% (HG)

- e) BTEC Performance Dance (6) Some Improvement Predicted
- Focus on tracking and monitoring of individual students
  - Strengthened HoD oversight and support for practical and written elements
  - Focus on assessment and resubmission

ALPS Connect May 2024 Prediction	ALPS Summer 2023 Results National	ALPS Summer 2023 Results Client	Predicted 2024 D*/D	Summer 2023 D*/D

		Client		
8	8	7	33%	25%

f) **Below Average A Level Subjects (2023)** Predicted Improvement

- English Language
- Spanish

g) **Below Average A Level Subjects (2023)**\_Some Improvement Predicted

- English Literature
- Music
- Music Technology
- 3D Design
- Geography
- Geology

h) **Below Average Vocational Subjects (2023)**\_Predicted Improvement

- Applied Business
- Uniformed Public Services
- Financial Studies

i) **Emerging Areas of Concern or Decline (2024 Predictions)**

Accounting (30) Decline Predicted

- Staffing issues and changes to staffing have remained through cover period
- Emergency package of ISG support and intervention from January 2024
- Additional timetabled lessons during revision period

ALPS Connect May 2024 Prediction	Summer 2023 Results National	ALPS Summer 2023 Results Client	Predicted 2024 A*/A and High Grades	Summer 2023 A*/A and High Grades
7	6	5	23% (A*/A) 27% (HG) 4 fails predicted	8% A*/A 30% (HG)

j) **Summary – Areas of Most Concern June 2024**

Statistics – 2 years of poor results and increased student numbers for 2025

Accounting – See above

BTEC Dance – Acting element of this qualification to be discontinued. Issues with balance of assessment and practical aspects and enrolment.

A discussion took place on how the departments arrive at their predicted grades and do they have any correlation with the predicted grades given to students for their UCAS application. Mr Pearson replied that some departments will take a hard line to encourage students to work harder whilst others will take a softer approach to give students confidence. Ms Phillips added that there is a distinction between UCAS grades and predicted grades. Mr Pearson said that only about 18% achieve their predicted grade. Mr Hickey added that all the information must be evidence based.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that this is the first time that things have settled down since Covid. In October the college will have in year assessment data and will need to establish a benchmark.

Dr Smith asked what was the current position in respect of recruiting staff. Mr Pearson replied that the college has made some good appointments for September 2024 but the quality of the short lists were weaker. Some subject areas are more difficult to fill and the availability of suitable supply staff is becoming increasingly difficult. In some colleges none specialist teachers are being used. There is evidence to suggest that because of work life balance teachers are wanting to teach at colleges nearer their home.

Governors thanked Ms Phillips for her presentation and if they had any questions they should contact Ms Phillips.

## **7. STUDENT WITHDRAWALS**

Mr Bailey circulated a paper that outlined the various reasons why students leave the college before completing their course of study. The number of leavers was very similar to last year with 134 compared to 133. Very few students leave after the retention deadline. Students leave for a variety of reasons including mental health, behaviour, students on the wrong course and seeking employment. Lower prior attainment before coming to the college is one of the main issues. The number that leave is similar to other colleges.

Governors noted that within ill health the main reason was mental health. Ms Donelon asked what percentage was due to mental health. Mr Bailey replied that it is probably around 80%. Covid still has an impact on students. Mr Martin asked if a student could be at the college for 3 years due to illness. Mr Bailey confirmed that could be the case. Dr Smith felt that the college was doing a great job in difficult circumstances and was pleased to see that the college has good relationships with NHS providers.

Mr Bailey acknowledged that the college needs to improve at recording and chasing students to find out the reason for leaving.

Mr Bailey showed Governors the information that the college holds in relation to students' attendance. The information is updated regularly for use within the college. The intention is to provide Governors with access to this information via Google Drive. The information could be anonymised so that individual students could not be identified. A glossary of terms used in the reports would also be provided.

Mr Bailey left the meeting at this point.

## **8. CURRICULUM ISSUES**

Mr Pearson advised Governors of the following;

- a) In Performing Arts, BTEC Dance would no longer be offered, students would follow a theatre/drama studies course.
- b) Music and Music Technology – the college were considering changing the examination board.
- c) RS – the college were considering changing the examination board.
- d) English Literature - the college were considering changing the examination board.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that it is not clear what a change in government would have on the proposed curriculum reforms, it could lead to a delay in the process and a review of policy. Mr Hickey asked if recruitment would continue to courses that were in jeopardy. Mr Pearson

replied that for 2024/2025 recruitment would continue. He added that the college would offer Statistics and Accounting for at least another year.

**9. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

A copy of the current Teaching and Learning Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. After a full discussion it was agreed that no changes needed to be made.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a) Policy Reviews

Dr Smith advised Governors that he had reviewed the college's Attendance Policy which came under the remit of this committee. He has also reviewed Staff Code of Conduct and IT Acceptable Use including AI policy which would be considered by the General Purposes Committee.

Mr Hynes would review the Student Disciplinary policy and report back to the committee.

RESOLVED: That the Attendance Policy as amended be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting to be held on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 4.30pm, subject to the Calendar of Meetings being agreed by the Governing Body at its meeting on 25 June 2024.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Date \_\_\_\_\_