

AQUINAS COLLEGE

TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Date: 6 February 2024

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss M Braithwaite, 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 2023 copies of which had been circulated previously were approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record subject to Minute 7 (b) (page 3, 4th paragraph) delete the.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Results Overview – Minute 7

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the ALPS Value for Statistics had been reported as a 7 instead of a 9 in her report to Governors at the last meeting.

6. DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Diocese had informed him that the college would have a Denominational Inspection in the current academic year. This would be either between now and the end of the Spring term or early in the Summer term before the half term break at Whit. 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. The inspection would not cover adult education, it would focus on 16-19 students during the daytime.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that St John Rigby College in Wigan had recently had a Denominational inspection by Liverpool Diocese. Mr Bailey had contacted the college for feedback from the inspection.

Mr Pearson felt that the college had made a lot of progress since the new Lay Chaplain and a new head of RE had been appointed. Connections had been made with the local clergy and prayer life in the college has increased. The Mission and Ethos Group continues to meet in preparation for the inspection. A full staff training session had been held on Catholic Life of the college. Mr Bailey added that an RE handbook had been produced for RE teachers.

Miss Braithwaite asked how many students attend weekly mass in the college. Mr Pearson replied that tutor groups attend in turn. Mr Hynes asked what are students likely to say to inspectors. Mr Pearson replied that focus groups had been held with students and the feedback had been positive. All L6 students had attended a Welcome Mass. He added that the college's Mission Statement is in every room of the college.

Mr Martin advised Governors that he had met with the Chaplain and Assistant Chaplain at Xaverian College and they had been impressed with the work of Laetitia Sibeh, Lay Chaplain at the college.

Ms Phillips added that everything is embedded in the college from a group tutor point of view.

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

Ms Phillips circulated a paper to Governors that showed the results of the Self-Assessment Review (SAR) for the years 2019, 2022 and 2023.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the SAR process shows where the college thinks it is at and it helps the college to prepare its Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). It is planned to put a draft document of the QIP on the Governors portal. Mr Pearson added that the college is in a good place and that the SAR should provide the evidence to support this. The college QIP will be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the committee.

Mr Hynes asked if Ofsted had made any comment about the college's SAR. Mr Pearson replied that they acknowledged the strength of our outcomes but had been more interested in mid-term data being used to hold the college to account; they wanted to see live data. He added that if end of year outcomes are better it suggests standards are better and that using mid-term data has proven an unreliable predictor of actual outcomes. However, the ISG team are looking at ways to indicate performance levels at this meeting for the future.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the paper circulated looked at departments and subjects within departments. The data is based on results, retention, value added and evidence of the impact of change. There is an element of discussion, standardisation and moderation. The college uses the following grading structure and a plus/minus grade had been used for the first time this year.

1 = Excellent 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Requires Improvement.

The subjects colour coded red were areas where improvement was needed. The Quality Review meetings had looked at in-year data and students work. A discussion took place on the subjects that were under-performing and Ms Phillips advised Governors that the college were working with the subject leaders on what needed to change. There are a number of measures that need to be implemented to facilitate improvement and these include; a) acceptance that change is needed, b) change of practice, c) marking and assessment of students' work, d) preparation outside of classroom e) change of examining board.

Dr Smith added that it was clear that a great deal of work is being undertaken with the different subjects to bring about improvement.

Particular reference was made to RE in view of the forthcoming Denominational Inspection. Mr Bailey advised Governors that the data suggested that the college was not on the right specification and may need to look at changing the examination board. The absence of the Head of Department on maternity leave had not helped. However, new data shows that students are getting higher grades, currently an Alps 5, and mock examinations are taking place this week.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that for the Spring term meeting in 2025 he will provide in-year data. The college is focusing on areas of concern and is supporting those subjects.

Mr Hynes suggested that it may be a good idea for Governors to meet with Mr Pearson and/or Ms Phillips in between meetings of this committee. Mr Hickey added that Governors could be invited to Quality Review meetings. Dr Smith had recently attended these meetings and was impressed with the level of detail addressed.

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

8. DESTINATIONS REPORT 2023

Mr Pearson introduced a paper that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting which showed the destinations of students who had left the college at the end of the 2022/2023 academic year.

Miss Braithwaite asked what does the report tell Governors. Mr Pearson replied that it shows how the college would be judged in terms of destinations, it shows where students go and can be compared to other colleges. It also shows where students from various categories go to. Mr Bailey added that the college can be benchmarked against other colleges and that it shows how the college is meeting the Local Skills Need. He added that the skills agenda is embedded within the college. Miss Braithwaite asked does the college get feedback from students on whether or not they obtained their degree. Mr Bailey replied that the college tries to get feedback from students but also gets a HESA report that reports on their outcomes.

Governors' attention was drawn to the Executive Summary in the report which showed the following:

- a) 1131 students who had completed a level 3 course left the college in 2023. Additionally, 6 students also completed their studies who were on level 2 courses.
- b) 60.4% of students progressed straight to higher education courses, whilst 15.7% progressed to either an apprenticeship or employment. The remaining 23.9% of students took a gap year, an FE course as well as some currently seeking opportunities.

c) The Final UCAS reports students completing level 3 qualification and accepting a place at university was 683.

- Female acceptances – 368 (53.9%)
- Male acceptances – 291 (42.6%)
- Prefer not to say – 24 (3.5%)
- 51 Students deferred entry to university for 2024
- Total number of students gaining a place at a university was 734 students
- Number of students who gained entry to their first choice – 578 (84.6%) a decrease from last year (598).

d) 194 students accepted places at Russell Group Universities which was 28.4% of total number of acceptances to universities. This is a decrease from last year 202 students (30.0%) of total acceptances.

e) Oxford and Cambridge places – 5 students.

f) Universities in northern cities continue to be the most popular with Aquinas students. Once again Manchester Metropolitan University is the most popular university with 96 students progressing onto a higher education degree course. Other popular universities were University of Salford 71, Sheffield Hallam 51, University of Sheffield 37, Leeds Beckett 32, University of Liverpool 28, Liverpool John Moores University 27 and Lancaster University 22.

g) Students from the college went on to 89 institutions compared to 88 in the previous year.

h) 118 students out of a total of 175 who identified as anything other than White British (67.4% of cohort) progressed onto higher education. This compares to last year, with 126 students out of 167 (74.4%).

i) 122 students out of a total of 218 who identify as from a “widening participation background” (55.9% of their cohort) progressed onto higher education. This compares to last year, with 129 students out of 195 (66%).

j) Governors noted that 56 students started apprenticeship compared with 59 in the previous year.

k) 48.9% of students who left are based in the North West.

l) Aspire students who participated during the first cohort (2021/2022), 43 out of 78 completed their studies in Summer 2023. 57.3% of those students progressed to either university or employment.

m) There were 181 other, students who do not fit in one of the other categories.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that most students were staying in the North West due to the financial pressures that families are facing.

RESOLVED: That the Student Destination Overview for 2023 be noted.

9. CURRICULUM ISSUES

Mr. Pearson advised Governors that BTECs will be reformed to Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQ). However, BTECs can continue to be taught in 2024/2025. The college has around 25% of its courses on BTEC qualifications.

The college offers 11 vocational courses with the three most popular being Criminology, BTEC Law and Applied Business Studies. The 2024/2025 academic year will be the last one that these subjects will be offered. Miss Braithwaite asked what does Criminology cover. Mr Pearson replied that it is a mixture of sociology, law and forensic science and that it overlaps many subjects. The remaining 8 subjects that have a future may well develop as AAQs. An AAQ will be two years long and only 1 AAQ can be studied alongside 2 A levels. At the moment 2 vocational courses can be studied along with 1 A level.

A question about the Manchester Baccalaureate was raised. Mr Bailey advised Governors that it had been launched by the Greater Manchester Mayor and was designed to meet the skills needs of Greater Manchester.

Mr Pearson added that if there is a change of Government it is possible that the proposed changes may be paused. In the meantime, the college is looking at alternative courses to offer from 2025/2026 academic year.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Martin asked what would happen to those teachers who taught the subjects that would no longer be offered at the college. Mr Pearson replied that many have criminology, law, sociology background and the college would look to offer them roles to cover those subjects.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11 June 2024 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____