

# **AQUINAS COLLEGE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 1 October 2024

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

## **GOVERNORS PRESENT**

Mr R Harris, Mr B Hickey, Mr G Hynes, Mr D Pearson, Dr A Smith and Mr M Taylor.

In attendance:

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 A Smith.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms H Donelon, Mr A Martin and Mr A Bailey (Vice Principal).

### **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 11 June 2024 copies of which had been circulated previously were approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- a) Minute 4 Committee Minutes – Replace next meeting with February 2025 meeting.
- b) Minute 8 Curriculum Issues – Replace BTEC Dance with BTEC Acting.

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

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

## 6. RESULTS OVERVIEW

Ms Phillips advised Governors that last year the results at the college had been very good. She circulated 3 papers a) Results Overview 2024, b) LTA /Quality 2023/2024 Subject Breakdown and c) Predicted Grades for 2024 that showed the college's results compared to the national average for the period 2023 and 2024. Ms Phillips added that the information is in a different format from previous years.

a) Results Overview 2024 – Overall analysis, figures in brackets are 2023.

Pass Rate (A* - E)	99%	(98.8%)
A*	8%	(7.1%)
A*/A	27%	(25.8%)
High Grades (A*-B)	59%	(57.5%)
A*-C	83%	(82.0%)
A*-D	95%	(94.4%)

The number of high grades increased by 1% and the number of U grades reduced from 36 to 21. The positive value added was up 0.07.

### ALPS

ALPS 3	ALPS 3+4	ALPS 3-5	ALPS 6	ALPS 7+8
31%	57%	80%	11%	8.5%

Ms Phillips circulated a paper that gave details of the results for 2023. She advised Governors that the following papers were on the Governors Google Drive:

Alps Value Added for the college is ALPS 3 which reflects performance in the top 25% nationally.

b) A Level Subject Breakdown 2024

KPI (A Level)

ALPS 3 HG 60%      A\* 8%      A\*/A 28%      Pass 99% (reduction in U grades)

Further reduction in Blue ALPS from 8% to 6%.

- i) There were 11 subjects that had an ALPS score of 3 (up from 10)
- ii) There were 8 subjects that had an ALPS score of 4 ( up from 5)
- iii) There were 9 subjects that had an ALPS score of 5 (down from 10)
- iv) There were 4 subjects that had an ALPS score of 6 (down from 9)
- v) Three subjects have a Blue ALPS
- vi) One subject had an ALPS score of 7 and therefore a Blue ALPS
- vii) Two subjects have an ALPS score of 8 and therefore a Blue ALPS

Accountancy (30 students), Statistics (34 students) and Geography (83 students) are in Blue ALPS. Accountancy has had staffing issues and the college have had difficulty in appointing staff. Geography has shown a decline but the college are confident that the change in staffing in Geography with a new Head of Department will improve things. Between 80 -100 students are taking Geography in any one year.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that not all colleges offer Accountancy and Statistics. He added that if there is no improvement in these subjects the college will look for alternatives. The numbers in L6 will be controlled with only 2 groups in each subject.

Ms Phillips added that Geology is another subject of possible concern. The college may look at bringing together Geology, Geography and Statistics as a particular area of focus.

Mr Taylor added that there were 14 subjects where there had been improvement.

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Focus and support needs of each department will be discussed at further Quality Review Meetings in October/ November 2024. Good practice will be shared across departments.

There will be a focus on further developing all subjects, with a particular focus on essay subjects for 2024/2025. There will also be a focus on planning and sequencing (inside and outside the classroom), ownership and stretch to support KPI for higher grades and A/A\*

Dr Smith added that he had been impressed with the work being undertaken at the Quality Review meetings.

#### c) Vocational Subjects – Level 3

Overall Pass Rate is 100%, D\*33%, D\*/D (High Grades) are 70% and D\* -M 93%.

#### d) Vocational Subject Breakdown showing their D/D\* rate

i) Double Sports CTEC	100%
ii) IT	60%
iii) Applied Science	60%
iv) Health and Social Care	64%
v) Applied Law	79%
vi) Music performance	90%
vii) Creative media	74%
viii) Performance – Acting/Dance	67%
ix) Uniformed Protective Services	64%
x) Financial Studies	41%
xi) Applied Business	45%
xii) Acting	33%
xiii) Criminology	65%

Ms Phillips advised Governors that support is needed for teachers in Dance and Acting in assessment due to a lack of accurate predictions for outcomes.

#### e) GCSE/Level 2 Results

i) English	Grade 4 and above	82%	November results 60 out of 90 passed
ii) Maths	Grade 4 and above	64%	November results 55 out of 110 passed
iii) Business	4 GCSE Equivalent	93%	
	2 GCSE Equivalent	100%	
f) Other			
EPQ	(A* -B)	73%	

Ms Phillips informed Governors that there will be a Results Review meeting with every department. There will be Learning, Teaching and Assessment appraisal and each department will receive a RAG rating. There are four ratings:

- i) Understanding – not understanding fully yet
- ii) Development - understand but not confident
- iii) Implementation - appraisal understood and developed
- iv) Advanced - full understanding

A discussion took place on the predictions that departments had made. Mr Harris asked what does the information tell us about the departments. Ms Phillips replied that the assessment data has to be reliable and the teacher/ department need to have a sense of contextualisation.

Mr Pearson added that no department is planning for a decline, if there is a decline it will be because of certain factors and it is better for the department to identify it and the reasons than for it to be a surprise.

With the impending Denominational Inspection Governors sought clarification on RE. It was noted that there were only 38 students taking RE. There were 2 groups in both L6 and U6. Mr Pearson advised Governors that this number was not low, it was above the national average which is around 1.2% of entries. The college had recently changed the examining board from EDUCAS to OCR and a new teacher has been appointed. Mr Pearson added that GCSE had been more difficult and that RC secondary schools have to make all students study RE.

Mr Taylor asked is there a correlation between subjects and staffing difficulties. Mr Pearson replied that there is minimal correlation but accountancy was a difficult subject to cover last year.

The Governors thanked Ms Phillips for the informative presentation and report.

## **7. COLLEGE FOCUS 2024/2025**

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the results for 2023/2024 had been outstanding and the college were very pleased with them. There were only 2/3 subjects that were a concern. The work that the college has done over the last number of years on in respect of Teaching, Learning and Assessment has borne fruit. There is a good understanding of what Teaching, Learning and Assessment involves for departments, subjects, teachers and students. The focus has subtly changed and the college are now looking at further marginal gains. There is reflective practice and reflective learning with a distinct focus each year.

The college are looking at colleagues working together and sharing good practice across departments and supporting each other. One particular area is looking at large essay based subjects from a quality perspective and the development of skills. Everyone needs to work as a team, quality is important and is a constant focus.

Dr Smith expressed the view that the college has come a long way, particularly over the last few years.

Mr Pearson added that at the Governors training in May 2025 the college will identify new areas for the college to focus on.

## **8. DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION**

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had just been notified that the Denominational Inspection will take place on Thursday and Friday this week (3 and 4 October). He added that he had spoken to the Lead Inspector concerning the arrangements for the inspection. The inspection will start at 8.00am on Thursday and finish at 5.00pm on Friday. In addition, Mr Pearson had spoken to the Director of Education at the Diocese.

The inspection team will consist of the following:

- a) the lead inspector who is an ex headteacher
- b) another retired former headteacher
- c) A HOD of RE from a sixth form college outside of the Diocese

Mr Pearson advised Governors that most of the RE lessons in the college take place between Monday and Wednesday each week. Out of the 96 lessons only 6 take place on a Thursday or Friday. It had been decided that mass within the college would be held on Friday.

As part of the second day of the inspection the team would like to meet with a small subset of Governors. Whilst the schedule of the day is not yet known, it is hoped that a meeting on be arranged on Friday morning around 10.00am and with mass said around 10.45am. They have requested that Tom and Brendan (as our Catholic Life link governor) meet with them. The inspection team will also want to meet with Early Career Teachers, a cross section of other staff and students, along with staff from the RE department and SLT. Staff have also been sent a survey to complete. There will be regular Keeping in Touch meetings with the Principal during the inspection. One of the questions in the survey is "has the college improved since the last inspection". It was noted that the last RE inspection was part of the Ofsted Inspection in 2008.

Mr Pearson felt that it would be good to get the inspection teams view on where the college is at in relation to RE provision within the college.

## **9. CURRICULUM ISSUES**

Mr Pearson outlined the latest position in relation to the proposed Post 16 Level 3 Reforms. Under the previous Government plans, it would have meant that September 2024 would have been the last time that the college can offer some of the Applied General subjects that it currently offers. The current Government had made a promise to pause and review the removal of the Applied General and introduction of Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQs). However, the position has changed, and a review is now expected to be completed by the end of the year, although the process has not yet started.

The courses that will be affected are as follows:

Applied Business, Law and Criminology the 3 biggest AGQ courses at the college would all go. The college are looking at alternative courses. Financial Studies is already being phased out.

Discussions have begun about suitable programmes of study, prior attainment levels and entry requirements as well as learning and teaching approaches for students with weaker prior attainment. The college is also engaging with feeder schools to understand their curriculum offer and consider how the college can complement this in the pathways that are offered.

Mr Taylor asked what impact would the Greater Manchester Combined Authority proposed that the Manchester Baccalaureate have on the college. Mr Pearson replied that there would be little impact on the college, it would mainly affect Cheadle and Marple College and Stockport College both of which are part of the Trafford Group of Colleges.

Mr Pearson added that the college will need to look again at the prior attainment of students before allowing them on to certain courses, e.g. Many courses need a prior attainment of grade 5 or 6 at GCSE currently and the college would need to consider lowering that in certain areas.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no Any Other Business.

## **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

4 February 2025 at 4.30pm

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_