# AQUINAS COLLEGE
# TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Date: 7 October 2025
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: College

## GOVERNORS PRESENT

Ms E Bradbury, Mr L Byrne, Ms J Dommett, Mr B Hickey, Mr G Hynes, Mr A Martin and Dr A Smith.

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 A Smith.

## 2. WELCOME TO NEW GOVERNORS

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Dommett, Mr Byrne and Ms Bradbury (Staff Governor) to their first meeting of the committee.

## 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Ms H Donelon.

## 4. 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.

## 5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025 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 8 (a) Safeguarding – Last line to read Dr Smith added “that there are legal complications with safeguarding within the college”.

## 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

## 7. RESULTS OVERVIEW

Ms Phillips introduced a paper that outlined the results for 2025 and advised Governors that the additional papers detailed below are available on the Governors Drive:

a) Nick Allen and ALPS value added reports (whole college, subjects, group of learners)
b) Adult Education Results 2025
c) Pathways Results 2025

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the standards have returned to those of 2019 and that the college has compared the top level data for A level and Vocational subjects to 2019, 2024 and 2025 and to benchmarks, where these are available. There have been 43 grade changes due to Reviews of Marking and retrospective special considerations. 7 reviews are still outstanding.

The A level results have improved further since 2024 and there has been a 1% increase in High Grades where the college is significantly (5%) above the national averages for this and subsequent grade points. A* has also increased, in line with the college's target and is now in line with national average. Pass rates have remained high and retention is also high at 93% for A level. The A grade has remained static and 1% below national averages. Predictions for A Grade at 29% were more optimistic than transpired. This is an area of focus for 2025/2026.

a) A Level Subject Breakdown

ALPS 3 reflects performance in the top 25% nationally
ALPS 5 indicates average performance
ALPS 7 and 8 (Blue ALPS) are significantly below average performance

ALPS 3 Subjects: Biology, Physics, Photography, PE, Economics, Environmental Science and Law.

ALPS 4 Subjects: Chemistry, Maths, Film Studies, Media Studies, Music Technology, Art and Design and Graphic Design.

ALPS 5 Subjects: Psychology, Business Studies, Accounting, Music, Drama and Theatre, Further Maths, Textiles, 3 D Design, English Language and Literature, English Language, RS, Sociology and Spanish.

ALPS 6 Subjects: French, German, Politics, Computing and Statistics.

A number of subjects are performing at a consistently high standard across a number of years. Accounting and Statistics had additional support and intervention and improved significantly. Two usually well performing subjects Computing and Politics have dipped over the last two years. Dr Smith felt that photography should have been included in the high performing group being the only subject with 100% A*, A and B grades. Ms Phillips agreed that it should have been included and had amended the report on the Governors portal.

Four subjects have Blue ALPS and remain a case for concern and these are History 7, English Literature 7, Geography 7 and Geology 9. Each of these subjects will be closely monitored, through additional support and intervention.

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 2025. Good practice will be shared across departments.

A discussion took place on the higher proportion grade changes in STEM subjects compared to other subjects where re-marks had been requested. Dr Smith expressed the view that these subjects are more factual. Mr Bailey responded by outlining the marking system and added that a change is only made if the result is in the wrong band.

Mr Hynes asked why Black students, particularly males appeared to be under performing. Ms Phillips responded by saying that the ISG links and subject leads have been asked for any reasons why this may be happening. Mr Hynes also asked why females appear to be performing poorly in Computing, Further Maths and Music Technology. Ms Phillips replied by saying that discussions have taken place with the subjects concerned and the college is supporting strategies relating to belonging and representation in the curriculum and highlighted some of the actions taken. Mr Hynes also asked what the J stood for in JEDI. Ms Phillips undertook to find out. Post meeting: **Justice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.**

b) Vocational Subjects – Level 3 ALPS 4 (National Average 5)

Overall Pass Rate is 100%, D*43%, D*/D (High Grades) are 72%. Retention = 88.8%

c) Vocational Subject Breakdown showing their D/D* rate

| | |
|---|---|
| i) Double Sports CTEC | 100% |
| ii) Single Sport | 79% |
| iii) IT | 72% |
| iv) Applied Science | 44% |
| v) Health and Social Care | 49% |
| vi) Applied Law | 80% |
| vii) Music performance | 83% |
| viii) Creative media | 0% |
| ix) Performance Acting | 52% |
| x) Performance Dance | 35% |
| xi) Uniformed Protective Services | 67% |
| xii) Financial Studies | 41% |
| xiii) Applied Business | 45% |
| xiv) Criminology | 55% |

d) GCSE/Level 2 Results

The data for GCSE results has been recorded differently this year, so no comparison is available. The total number of entries for daytime students in English and Maths was 210.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i) Grade 4 and above | 67% | National average 21% |
| ii) Starts | 206 | |
| iii) retention | 94.8% | National average 93.4% |

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

## 8. NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Ms Dommett introduced the Further education and skills inspection toolkit that had been circulated to Governors before the meeting. The toolkit sets out the areas that will be evaluated and graded on inspections under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It can also be used by leaders to support self-evaluation and continuous improvement. The new framework came into effect on 10 September 2025. As a post 16 provider, the earliest date of notification of an inspection would be 3 November 2025.

The new framework had 13 judgments within it. Ms Dommett drew Governors' attention to Safeguarding and Inclusion. Grading for Safeguarding will be shown as Not met or Met, whilst Inclusion (whole college) grading will be shown as Urgent improvement, Needs attention, Expected standard, Strong standard or Exceptional.

The college has to meet all aspects of the expected standard. Skills has a separate 4 part judgement covering employer, HE, civic and community and must run through all subjects.

Ms Dommett advised Governors that she was confident the college was at the expected standard or above and that the context within a sixth form college will be better understood by inspectors. The college SLT have attended a number of webinars and are working on the college SAR.

## 9. SAR & QIP APPROACH

Ms Phillips advised Governors that the SLR were preparing the college's SAR which covers Leadership, Skills, Inclusion and Safeguarding. There are 3 separate SARs covering the college as a whole, adult education and subject areas.

Mr Hynes asked if there is any additionality to the Further education and skills inspection toolkit. Ms Phillips replied that there would be specifics to the college to cover Catholic life, Enrichment under wider participation and development. Mr Hickey asked how were department heads coping. Ms Phillips replied that a working group has been established and that this year is a transitional year.

Ms Dommett advised Governors that the SLT are re-writing the college SAR and that department SARs in the new format aligned to the revised toolkit would be completed by the end of the academic year. It was noted that there would be a need for some training to take place. Ms Bradbury informed Governors that the Adult Education SAR was being written in the new format.

Ms Dommett added that the Ofsted framework is robust and vigorous but the college knows what is needed.

## 10. COLLEGE PRIORITIES 2025/2026

Ms Dommett advised Governors that the college had 6 priories for the 2025/2026 academic year and they were as follows:

i) to sustain outcomes and improve performance in essay based subjects

ii) enhance student recruitment

iii) adapt college SAR and QIP processes to support Ofsted

v) navigate the acadamisation landscape

v) national decisions around curriculum reform, V level to replace BTEC

vi) strengthening provision for pathways, adult education and skills

The Catholic Life of the college would always be at the forefront of what the college does.

## 10. COLLEGE APPROACH TO SKILLS

Mr Bailey outlined to Governors the approach that the college is taking to improve its curriculum to deliver the skills provision throughout the college. Particular reference was made of the need to meet the individual learners needs by meeting the requirements of employers, education, civic and the community. The new framework will look at local, regional and/or national needs.

There will be 6 skills weeks in college, 3 in each year to focus on transferable skills, further education, careers and to improve student and staff literacy around skills. Each department will have a Skills Planning document which will enable better tracking and monitoring of data. Mr Bailey went through the document for the benefit of Governors. There will be a personal development programme for students.

## 11. ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

Mr Bailey advised Governors that The Accountability Agreement is a formal document outlining the college's strategic objectives aligning with national priorities and local need. Its purpose is to ensure transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in educational outcomes. The Strategic Aims of the college for 2023-2026 are as follows:

a) To provide an outstanding educational experience, in line with our vision, which promotes the Cardinal Virtues and prepares students for their next steps in life.

b) To deliver a broad and rich curriculum that develops the personal, spiritual and academic growth of all students "so that they may have life and have it to the full" John 10:10

c) To ensure students and staff thrive at every stage of their journey, enabling them to Be More.

The Accountability Agreement had been updated and was sent to the DfE by the 30 June 2025.

Mr Hynes left the meeting at this point.

## 12. CURRICULUM ISSUES

Ms Dommett outlined the latest position in relation to the proposed Post 16 Level 3 Reforms. Under the current Government plans September 2026 is the last time that the college can offer some of the Applied General subjects that it currently offers. The courses that will be affected are Applied Business, Law and Criminology the 3 biggest AGQ courses at the college

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 recent announcement of a new V level qualification may mean that AAQ, BTEC and CTEC qualifications will cease, although at the moment very little is known about the requirements of the new V level qualification. It is felt that the college is in a strong position whereby it can respond to the changes in curriculum.

## 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no Any Other Business.

## 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

3 February 2026 at 4.30pm

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson