



Case Study: AQA Baccalaureate Elizabeth Chubb

‘ I think it’s brilliant; it is very good, a lucky find, really. If you think of all the pathways that we could have gone down, this has just been the right thing for our school. ’



Elizabeth Chubb has been teaching for 15 years and is Assistant Head Teacher and Head of Sixth Form at Aylesbury High School, a selective grammar school with a total of up to 400 girls in Years 12 and 13. The centre is also a specialist Language College and Training School. In 2009, over 75 per cent of A-levels achieved were A or B grades.

A group of 29 Year 13 students have taken the AQA Bacc in 2010. As Elizabeth says: ‘We are doing it as a bit of a pilot. We wanted to see whether it worked; how the girls react to it.’ Next year, about a hundred so far want to take the Bacc, ‘so I think that’s a bit of a success’.

The centre chose to introduce the AQA Bacc because ‘we wanted to reward our students and celebrate what they did’ in the community and their lives outside school. ‘Secondly, we wanted to add something to make Aylesbury High School distinctive’ and to make the sixth form attractive to external students. ‘It’s also helped our retention; students don’t leave us after Year 11.’

‘We liked the idea of the Enrichment Diaries and the Enrichment element was very important to us; it seemed to be very well structured.’ She added, ‘Many of our students needed to be “developed” into a frame of mind to go towards university and the Extended Project fitted in well with that.’

Elizabeth noted that the Bacc had already made a difference to students applying to university, for example, one student’s ‘entire Cambridge interview – or component of her interview – centred on the French poet which she’d done for her Extended Project. We’ve also had select universities giving a lower offer because [the students] have been doing the AQA Bacc.’



Parents are a little wary about the currency of the International Baccalaureate and [the AQA Bacc] provides a safe alternative, because you've got the breadth, you've got the depth, but you've got the gold standard of A-levels.]

Another advantage was that 'we wouldn't be separating the students out into a separate cohort, whereas with the International Baccalaureate you have to take them away from the normal A-level.'

As for integrating the AQA Bacc into the school curriculum? 'No problems at all.' Students already

get a chance to take an AS-level in Years 10 and 11 or in Year 12, 'so it's been a self-selecting group', and the A-level element 'just gets on with itself. All we've had to do, in terms of timetabling, is give a slot during the week where students can have time for their Extended Projects.' Teachers had had 'lots of guidance. AQA have been very, very helpful' with training, advice and resources.

A major benefit of the Bacc was that it had given students confidence, maturity and vital skills such as extended writing, public speaking and project management. 'That's an invaluable tool, not just for university, but for life.'

I'm very pleased with AQA. You've got a direct telephone number and they can answer your question straight away.]

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