Case Study

Aquinas College

- **Customer:** Aquinas College, Stockport
- **Technology:** LED lighting & control and boiler optimisers
- **Funding:** Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) via delivery partner Salix Finance
- **Outcomes:**
  - Upgrade from fluorescent to LED lighting, and installation of boiler optimisers
  - Project undertaken in Q1 2021 and completed before 31 March deadline required by the PSDS
  - Energys Group supplied and installed the new equipment, having also helped the college to complete the funding application

Energys Group helps Aquinas College progress decarbonisation strategy with major lighting upgrade

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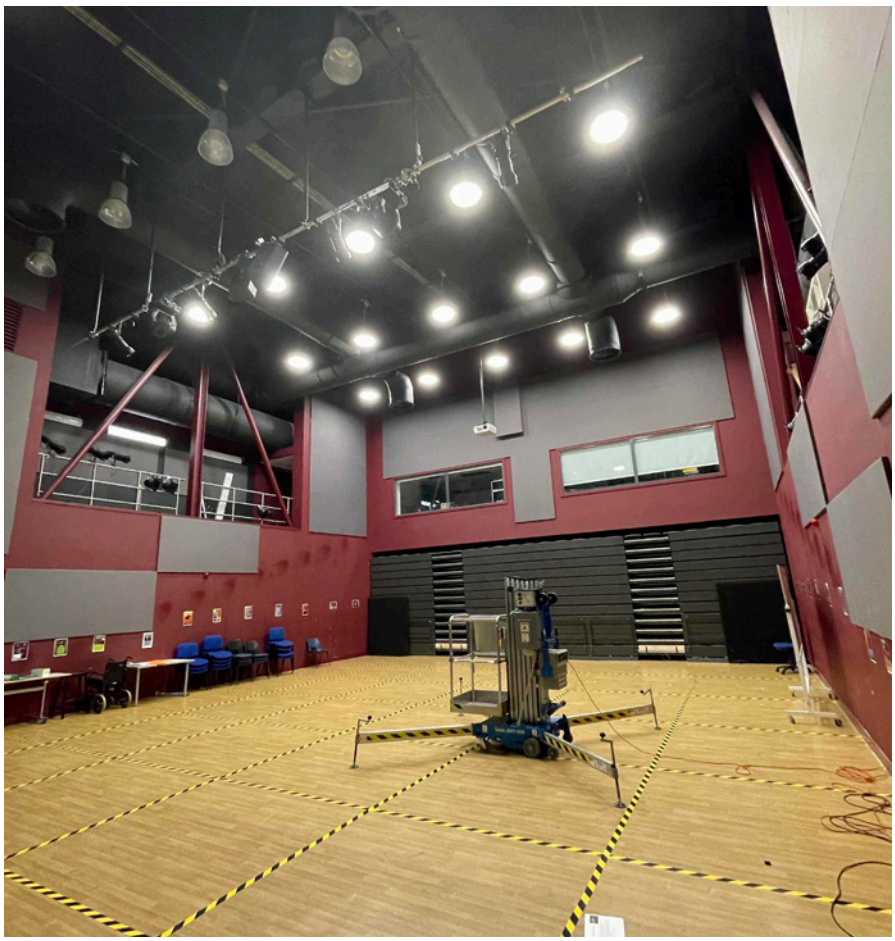
THE PROJECT

Based in Stockport, Greater Manchester, Aquinas College is a Roman Catholic sixth form college established in 1980 – although its naming after 13th century priest and philosopher Thomas Aquinas places it in a much longer lineage. However, the college's interest in new technologies and environmental improvements is anything but retrospective, and in this regard it recently took a big step forward with the installation at its main campus of a comprehensive new LED lighting system and boiler optimisers from Energys Group.



Chris Green, Head of Estates & Facilities at Aquinas College, recalls the genesis of the project: "One of the big factors here was that we had been spending a lot of time and money replacing lightbulbs throughout the year, and it had become unsustainable – to the point that one of our team was effectively spending a day every week replacing 'bulbs! Also, part of my role is to save money and to report on energy efficiency in line with the expectation that we move towards carbon neutrality. All those factors meant that replacing our old lighting was a very logical move."

Chris Green's team was able to secure finance from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), which was launched in autumn 2020 to support the public sector in taking a 'whole building' approach when decarbonising their estates. This brought with it some challenges because under the terms of the latest round of funding, projects had to be finished by the end of March 2021.

Although he did speak to several suppliers, it was ultimately a straightforward decision to enlist Energys Group. Chris Green recalls: "They really stood out from the others, whose attitude tended to be 'let us know what you want and we'll put something together for you'. By contrast Energys came in and said 'this is what we can provide for you, and this is how we would go about it.' They were also able to put the bid together for [PSDS delivery partner] Salix, which saved me a lot of time.

THE SOLUTION

The installation was completed in the first quarter of 2021. In one sense, this was easier than might normally have been the case due to the college largely being empty as a result of Covid lockdown, although Chris Green notes that “they made it clear that they would have been fine to schedule the work outside of college hours, should that have been needed.”

The new infrastructure includes 2700 LED lights drawn from the current Energys range, including panels, linears, wall lights and downlights. Chris Green singles out the creative use of wall lights in the theatre for particular attention: “They really have done a fantastic job there. Lights that are designed for walls were instead used hanging downwards on the ceiling, and it looks spectacular.”

Energys also replaced the existing and increasingly problematic lighting controls with new Intellidim sensor-based dynamic lighting controllers, which are already having a positive impact – financially and practically. “The issue with schools and colleges is that people leave lights on everywhere. In fact, the College reported that it used to spend 90 minutes at the end of each day switching them off! Thankfully this is no longer required thanks to our IntelliDim control technology. The Aquinas College team will now be able to make significant reductions to wasted energy where rooms are unoccupied, says Ian Humphries, Account Director at Energys Group.”

Completing the installation were six Energys Dynamic Burner Management Unit (DBMU) Boiler Optimisers, which improve boiler efficiency without affecting the temperature of the building.

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RESULTS & REFLECTIONS

Energys Group has forecast that Aquinas College will achieve a payback time of 5.7 years on a total project value of £359,882.94. The total annual energy cost saving is predicted to be £62,637.80, while the college is set to reduce yearly energy consumption by 451,281 kWh.

Describing the upgrade as "a very important part of our move towards net zero", the College's Chris Green has nothing but praise for Energys Group. "I would work with them every day of the week if I could," he says. "They are a fantastic company – very good at what they do and really on the ball. I'd love to work with them again."

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Chris Green
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