

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you as the newly appointed Executive Principal of UTC Reading and look forward to getting to know you and your children when they join us in September. UTC Reading is a school very close to my heart as I was previously Vice Principal when it opened in 2013, before taking over as Executive Principal at one of our sister schools, UTC Heathrow, in 2017. I am very much enjoying being back in Reading.

It is with regret, however, that my first communication with you is on a difficult topic. School inspectors from Ofsted have released a report on our school following their visit on the 8th and 9th February 2023. While the report was positive in many aspects, particularly our careers support, however, Ofsted's judgement is that the school is "inadequate" and needs improvement in particular areas. This is a critical report, but I welcome it because it highlights issues we are already acting on and reinforces our wider plans to provide the effective and enriching education that all our students deserve.

I want to therefore take this opportunity to outline my vision for the school, and the actions myself and my staff are taking, with the support of our Trust, to ensure that UTC Reading is, once again, recognised as a good and high performing school.

My vision for UTC Reading is to ensure that every student enjoys and feels safe at school, that they get the most enriching and effective experiences, and start to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the world of work.

I now want to share the actions we are already taking to reflect the feedback Ofsted have given us.

## **Safeguarding**

It is crucial that students feel safe at school, and that they know any concerns will be listened to and acted upon every time. We have taken significant actions already, including assemblies with students on who and how to report concerns, and introducing additional lanyards for safeguarding lead staff to wear so they are visible to students. We are also launching a campaign called Speak Up Speak Out, developed in one of our sister schools, which aims to educate all members of our diverse community on respectful behaviours to ensure that everyone is treated in the manner we expect, and they deserve. It will consist of assemblies and focused teaching on Personal, Social, Health and Emotion subjects like discrimination and harassment, as well as clear signposting of safeguarding support around the school.

In addition, we are engaging in staff training, and are also working with the Student Board on developing a charter, which we will launch in the summer term - I will tell you more about that in September. Finally, we are bringing in external support to review our safeguarding processes and retrain all staff.

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### Schools

- The Bicester School
  - Theale Green School
  - UTC Heathrow
  - UTC Oxfordshire
  - UTC Reading
  - UTC Swindon
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## **Behaviour**

Behaviour and dress code are the foundations for an atmosphere and environment where students feel safe and can effectively learn. We have reviewed both our behaviour and dress code policies, including consequences for poor behaviour and language. I will talk to you more when your child joins us in September, but I would like to reiterate how important your support is in helping us reinforce these policies.

Additionally, we are reviewing our PSHE curriculum, and will be bringing in external agencies to help us develop and deliver this to ensure that all students understand what appropriate behaviour looks like. Elements of this form part of our Speak Up Speak Out campaign that I mentioned before.

## **SEND**

Our support for students with SEND is not strong enough. We have recruited a new SENDCo, who starts with us after Easter. Their priority will be a complete review of our SEND policies and practices, including the support strategies teachers use with students. I will share contact details once they are in post with the parents and carers of those with SEND, plus of course they will be available on our website.

## **Conclusion**

Let me repeat my determination to resolve the issues that Ofsted has highlighted. I have no doubt that we will achieve rapid progress in the way we operate and support our students by working together in partnership with you and your family.

I appreciate that the report, and all the information contained in this letter, represents a significant amount of change in our school, and would therefore like to invite you to attend one of two events with us in the coming weeks. The first will be online on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April, and the second will be in school on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. These will be an opportunity for you to meet myself, Joanne Harper (CEO of Activate Learning Education Trust), and Jax Snipp (Head of School) and hear us talk more about all these important topics, and for you to ask questions.

[Click here](#) to join the online event; and [click here](#) to register for the in-person event.

If you have any questions you'd like us to answer in the meantime, please [complete this form](#) and we will come back to you. We will aim to do this within our usual 48-hour turnaround time, but please bear in mind this may be longer if we receive many questions.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible then.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Edwards".

Wayne Edwards  
Executive Principal  
UTC Reading