

Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of the summer term, I wanted to firstly thank you so much for your unwavering support since our OFSTED inspection in February. We have made significant improvements in many areas and I wanted to update you on our progress on this, as well as celebrate some of our student's fabulous achievements this term.

This end of year update is lengthier than the usual weekly update, so grab a cup of tea, or a nice cold lemonade (I won't pretend to be able to predict the UK weather while you read this), and I hope that sharing these updates is a useful round up of this academic year for our community.

An update on our progress since inspection...

Our immediate priority after the inspection was to ensure that students felt safe; we achieved that with immediate staff training and updates to our procedures, and are thrilled to report that in a recent series of sessions with our external safeguarding consultant, all students reported that they felt safe in school and had someone they trusted. We have, since then, been working hard on our Speak Up Speak Out campaign, which the student board have kicked off by developing our new Respectful Behaviours manifesto. Approved by the rest of the students in the school, this manifesto sets out how we want our school to feel like to be in, how we will all treat each other, and consequences for breaches. Posters and other supporting materials are now in development and we will be running lots of assemblies and tutor sessions when we return in September. Coupled with our work on anxiety around Mental Health Awareness week, we've seen real benefits in lessons already.

The second key element of feedback from the inspectors was around behaviour standards not being consistently applied. We have worked very hard on this with students, both in terms of defining and then enforcing our dress code and are pleased to see that standards are consistently higher already. The new UTC jackets are proving popular; students look smart and report liking having an alternative to the suit jacket. Behaviour has improved considerably, with our leadership team walks around school regularly showing calm learning environments, which are so important for effective, high quality lessons. We have welcomed Joanne Harper, our CEO and Cheri Ashby, our Chair of Trustees, regularly this term and they have both reported seeing a considerable, sustained improvement in the behaviour both in lessons and in corridors and at break times.

Thirdly was our Sixth Form attendance. We have worked hard to understand why students were not attending lessons and have identified the inconsistencies with cover lessons and changes to teachers as the main causes of this. We are addressing this and we are fully staffed for September 2023 and are working on the clarity in our communication around cover lessons and the quality of them. We have also employed a designated cover supervisor to support us with this and ensure that our inevitable need for some cover lessons will continue with high quality education throughout the school. We have also reintroduced clearer routines for attendance and stronger monitoring

procedures to ensure that we can support students with early intervention for drops in attendance to ensure they are attending UTC to make good progress.

Finally was our SEND provision. We have, as you know, recruited a SENDCo to cover Georgina's maternity leave, who has been doing a fabulous job supporting all our students and their parents. We are sad to see Rosslyn leave us in August, but thank her for all of her support. Rosslyn has worked hard with our multi-academy trust SEND and Safeguarding Lead, Linda Stevens who has joined us for two days per week. Linda will continue to support us and will remain as part of our SEND team when Georgina returns from her maternity leave. We have also recently received the report from our SEND audit, which contains a number of recommendations which we have already begun to action. We are pleased that we have a really clear action plan to work on and these areas to sustain the improvement in our SEND provision moving forwards into the new academic year.

Celebration of student and staff achievement...

Moving on from OFSTED, I wanted to take the opportunity to share with you some of the highlights that our students have enjoyed and achieved this term:

- [SSEN \(Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks\)](#) delivered an inspiring and challenging drop down day with Y12, challenging them to deliver electricity to a growing population within Net Zero targets. They did so well that one team were invited to present to the Distribution Executive Committee!
- [Chemistry is a scream](#): a rather macabre experiment disrupted the quiet of the science corridor as jelly babies met a screaming, sticky end.
- We celebrated Pride month with a lovely display created by one of our Y12 students from our Student Board.
- Students have secured apprenticeships with Rolls Royce and global building firm IGS, and to Plymouth University to read architecture. We wish all of them the best of luck and are so proud of their success.
- [A maths whizz](#) achieved Bronze in a national championship, placing him in the top 100 in country, what an achievement.
- Our Year 10 and 11 Computer Science students totally smashed the Perse Coding Challenge; achieving 8 distinctions and 4 merits in this international competition
- Congratulations to one of our Year 10 students who won a brand new Xbox One S this week for their achievement in a professional qualification! Amazing work and we hope you enjoy your prize.
- Records were smashed across the board at sports day with new UTC Records in shotput, discuss, 800m, 200m and 100m. well done to the athleticism and sportsmanship of all our students it was a fantastic day!

Preparation and changes for the next academic year...

As we end this academic year, we are sadly saying farewell to 4 of our staff members at UTC Reading.

Rosslyn Thompson joined us as a consultant SENDCo after our inspection and has worked tirelessly with the team to ensure that we review our SEND provision and are providing the best quality education to all of our students. Rosslyn is moving on to a full time position in another school and

we wish her the absolute best of luck in her new role. Her effort and focus at UTC Reading has been exceptional and we really do thank her for all of her support and guidance.

Soma Das joined us earlier this year as an English teacher and will be leaving us over summer to pursue a different life path. Soma quickly showed her skills in developing fast and strong relationships with students, staff and parents, as well as engaging students in her vibrant classroom. We wish Soma all the best in her future career, and will welcome you back to UTC Reading in the future, should you ever choose to come back this way!

Monika Dongare has been with us at UTC Reading since her teacher training and NQT year and has developed her skills incredibly over her time with us. Monika has championed initiatives at UTC Reading such as the girls who code club, along with many employer engagements which open a wide range of opportunities to our students. She has acted as tutor and mentor to many students and has made an incredible impact on their lives and we cannot thank her enough for this. Monika is a highly valued member of the team and will be sadly missed. We wish her the best of luck in her new job and future career.

Nicola Gibson was here at UTC Reading when it opened its doors and welcomed its first cohort of students back in September 2013. Her contribution to the UTC spans far and wide and many of our alumni students and parents often return to UTC to meet with Nikki and she has made lifelong impact on student lives. We would like to thank Nikki for her outstanding contributions to the life of UTC Reading over the past 10 years and wish her the best of luck in her relocation and her new job. We are sure that you will continue having this positive impact on student lives and we hope you remain a friend of UTC Reading well into the future.

SEND Provision from September 2023...

As mentioned above, Rosslyn is leaving us, but I wanted to provide reassurance that we have a strong SEND provision team in place to continue the hard work on improving and sustaining our SEN provision.

We are pleased to announce that we are being supported two days per week by our Trust Safeguarding and SEND Lead, Linda Stevens from September. Linda has a wide range of experience and has worked within the trust for many years. We are pleased to welcome Linda to our team and she will remain working with UTC Reading throughout the whole of the next academic year.

We are also working with an interim SENDCo until January. Aga will join us to support Linda and ensure that the SEND provision in school is high quality every day.

We will continue to hold parent forum sessions for SEND in the new year and will share these details with you in the new term.

Timetable changes from September 2023...

We have made some slight changes to our timetable structure from September. There is no change to the start and finish time of the day, but students will now have a consistent tutorial period from 10:45am-11:10am every day. This is to build in more time to discuss important matters, to build

relationships and to improve the delivery of our personal and professional development programme.

We believe by making this change, students and tutors will build stronger relationships and we will be able to build stronger relationships between tutors and families as there is consistent daily contact with a single person in the UTC Team.

Break and lunchtime shift slightly in the timetable with breaktime running from 11:10-11:30am and then lunch running from 1:30-2:00pm

For key stage 5 students we have introduced a hybrid working day on Fridays. There will be no face to face lessons running on Fridays in the UTC building. We are working with students to build their skills for the world of work and how this might look for them in the future with some flexibility to work from home.

On Fridays, we will hold online meetings, mentor sessions, drop in support sessions and many other support strategies for students to help them.

Please note that Fridays do remain as a school day and it is therefore not appropriate for students to seek part time work on this day. They will be required to interact regularly with UTC on Fridays and therefore need to be available for this. Any face to face events being held on Fridays need to be attended and notice will be given at least a week in advance.

A final thank you...

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to the entire staff team at UTC Reading. Despite a challenging year, they have worked tirelessly to support our students and keep their needs at the centre of what they do. With smiles, encouragement and plenty of biscuits and cake, they have continued to do everything they can to educate our students and work with them to prepare them for the world of work. To my whole team – thank you for the efforts that have been put in, it is very much appreciated and you are such a brilliant group of people to work with!

Key dates:

UTC Reading will be completely closed from 31st July to 14th August. If you are contacting staff over the break, please do remember they are on holiday, so it will take more time to reply than the usual 48 hour response time.

A level results day: Thursday 17th August

GCSE Results day: Thursday 24th August

Staff return to UTCR for inset on Friday 1st September.

New Year 10 and 12 students join the UTC on Tuesday 5th September.

Returning Year 11 and 13 students join us on Wednesday 5th September.

I would like to wish all members of our community a very happy summer break. Stay safe, relax and enjoy time to recharge before we return in September for an action-packed year of education, Employer engagement and fantastic opportunities to do something different to enhance your future careers.

Kind regards

Jennie Thomson

Acting Head of School