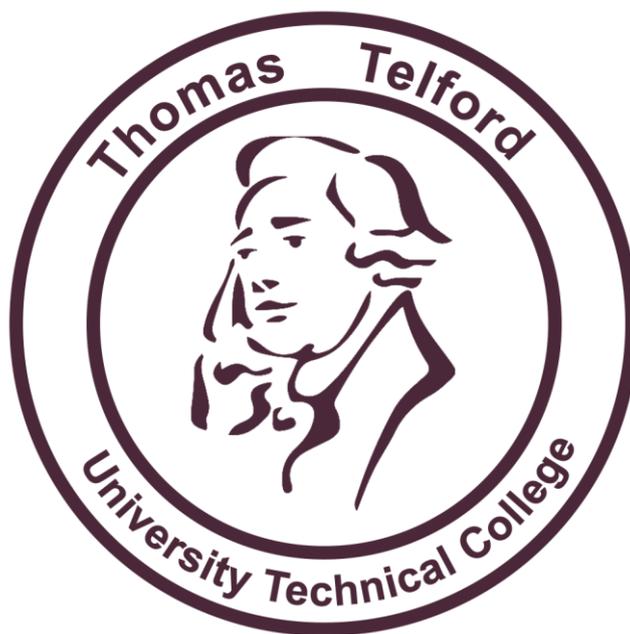


Principal's Report to the Local Governing Board



**Prepared by
Avtar Gill
Principal**

For the Local Governing Board's Meeting to be held Thursday 4 November 2021

Item 4: Matters Arising

Actions for the Principal from July 2021 Local Governing Board meeting:

- (i) Governor recruitment – nominee from University of Wolverhampton Chair

I have received a nomination for governor from the University of Wolverhampton.

- (ii) Investment portfolio opportunities & timing thereof ST

- (iii) Updating of the Risk Management Report Principal

The Risk Management Report will be updated to the new format that has been adopted by the TTMAT in time for the next governing board in Spring. Our current Risk Management Report is included in Appendix B.

- (iv) Progress with building expansion project Principal

To date all milestones for the school expansion project have been met. This includes alterations to our existing building which include upgrades to the kitchen, two rooms being converted into science labs and a re-modelled reception area. I am very happy with how these areas are working for us.

We have also re-modelled the admin office to allow a space for staff to make a drink and we have equipped this area with 6 desks complete with PC's so the staff have a workspace. I am also looking at other alterations to our existing space for practical and aesthetic reasons. I will be talking to the planning office to see what can be done to improve the appearance of the listed building as you enter reception.

We are now operating with 550 students which means the existing building is at full-capacity.

With regards to the new spaces we had handover of the social space at the start of October and it is working well. We are expecting a slight delay, possibly taking us to mid-November, for the handover of the new all-weather pitch. This is due to supply issues with fencing and more recently with the stitching to mark the pitch. We are expecting handover of the new performance space with bleacher seating in late December which is ahead of the original schedule.

All other areas including the new teaching block and sports block are currently expected to meet the previous timeline for handover of July 2022.

Introduction

The highlight of this term has been welcoming in our fantastic new Year 7s and seeing some resemblance of normality in our school though we do recognise that the pandemic is still with us and we are starting to learn to live with it.

The full UTC Extra programme which includes a wide range of enrichment activities is now running as intended and this has been extremely well received by Key Stage 3 students.

Summer School with our new Year 7 intake was an overwhelming success. Close to 90% of the cohort attended each day accessing a mixture of catch-up activities in the core subjects alongside an introduction to new courses and enrichment activities. Year 7 have settled in incredibly well.

All of our new teachers have made a fantastic start and I am going through the process of observing each of them and offering support to ensure that they quickly become very effective practitioners.

Very recently I made the decision to support Telford & Wrekin Local Authority with placing nine Key Stage 3 students who are refugees from Afghanistan. This is something that has happened at Thomas Telford School and they have found it to be a very positive experience. In addition to this, given the trauma that these children have been through, and having discussed the situation with staff and our students at the UTC we believe that there is a moral imperative to support them as much as we are able.

The UTC continues to work effectively with the Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust (TTMAT) and I have included the minutes of the most recent TTMAT Heads Collaboration -see Appendix C.

Covid-19 Autumn Term

Unfortunately, we have had roughly 5% of students off throughout this term with Covid-19 as well as a number of staff cases. Work has been made available through various means for students who are isolating. In line with local authority advice we have now returned to staff and students wearing masks in communal areas. All staff, students and visitors are asked to sanitise their hands-on entry to the UTC and regular hand-washing is encouraged. Home testing is ongoing and we are managing the distribution of test kits effectively. The risk-assessment is regularly updated to reflect any changes to our practice.

The UTC continues to monitor the effect of lost learning on the curriculum and ways to mitigate for this such. We have kick-started regular after-school 'Intervention' sessions for a large number of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students. We are also putting plans in place to offer weekend and holiday small group catch-up sessions.

UTC Extra

Our full UTC Extra programme has now been running since September and this involves enrichment, intervention and employer-led projects with all staff contributing to two evenings per week

Enrichment

Enrichment has been a fantastic success throughout this term with an offer of 32 Clubs to students across 4 nights of the week. We have 100% uptake across KS3 meaning every child attends Enrichment at a minimum of once per week. In addition to this we have run a number of sports fixtures.

Enrichment clubs include:

5K Run Club, Chess, Cartooning, Debate Society, Dragon's Den, Film Club, Textiles, Yoga, Journaling, Fitness, Photoshop, STEAM, Mad Science Club and many, many others.

Intervention

Intervention has returned to a normal offer since September. Following consultation with Middle Leaders, these sessions will remain short, sharp and focussed (1.5 hours x 6 weeks) in duration targeted at those students who have been identified to require immediate intervention. Various sessions are running every evening. The focus for the first half-term is on Years 11 and 13 and in addition we have a small number of Y8 students attending after-school numeracy sessions once a week.

Employer-led Projects

Employer-Led projects have been re-introduced across all 3 areas of Innovate, Design and Build. Students in Y11 and Y13 are the first to be offered the experience between September and December. All students are attending one of the projects, with Engie supporting Build; Balfour Beatty supporting Innovate and the University of Wolverhampton School of Art supporting Design. We would welcome Governors attending the final student presentations in December.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

SLT have reviewed last year's School Improvement Plan (SIP) and have now written the SIP for 2021-22 which you can find in Appendix D. Our five key priorities for this academic year are:

- Support the emotional well-being of students and respond to additional safeguarding responsibilities.
- Identify and provide for those students in need of academic catch-up.
- Ensure the completion of a full Year 9 GCSE curriculum in preparation for the new KS4 cohort.
- Work with the DfE & Contractor to ensure the new building and facilities are delivered by July 2022.
- Support development of middle leaders in English, maths and science to provide them with the knowledge and skills to lead improvements in their areas.

School Self-Evaluation form (SEF)

SLT have reviewed the UTC's most recent self-evaluation and updated it -see Appendix E.

Safeguarding matters and the current status of DBS checks

17 new staff have started at the UTC since the last report. These have all received appropriate safeguarding training and introduced to the CPOMS reporting system. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has provided training on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Schools to new staff and to existing staff who had not been able to attend previous session. The DSL and 3 others from within the safeguarding team have updated their mandatory Core Working Together training, 2 others are booked in for later this year. No update will be required for 2 years.

All staff will be attending a CPD session prior to October Half Term led by Diversity Role Models around supporting staff with awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, language and ideas for an inclusive curriculum and strategies for managing challenging situations effectively.

The Single Central Register (SCR) is up to date with all new staff including those who started in September 2021. Jayne round (JRO) maintains the SCR with the DSL and Principal carrying out termly audits. The DSL and JRO have carried out a triangulation of staff records for all new and incoming staff of the SCR. New staff to the school are required to complete an application for an enhanced DBS. Existing staff complete a self-declaration every year confirming they have not received any criminal convictions in the last 12 months. The DSL attended a Managing Allegations training led by the LA LADO. During this training it was discussed about the strongly recommended process of schools renewing DBS every 3 or 5 years (as per KCSiE). This was discussed with the trust to see what their process is and it was decided that staff would now be required to update every 5 years.

The DSL has updated the safeguarding policy to reflect the new KCSiE changes. The PSHE/RSE policy has also been updated to reflect that the statutory requirements are now in effect from September 2021. The PSHE programme has been audited to ensure that all the statutory requirements are met through drop down PSHE sessions, PT time delivery and assemblies. Parents of all new students have been consulted about the new programme, receiving the programmes of study and a PowerPoint explaining the DfE statutory requirements, PSHE/RSE policy and PSHE curriculum map.

All year groups have received an assembly on Peer-on Peer abuse this half term to ensure they are aware of what are unacceptable behaviours, how to report any incidents of abuse and how they will be supported at the UTC.

Again referral/ presenting issues were varied – although some of these have underlying issues of a more complicated nature and therefore reflect student support needs - for example, issues around complicated grief or anger. Provision is still in place to support students via online platforms and telephone (utilising appropriate confidentiality and an ethical approach) when required. However, it is anticipated that this academic year counselling support will be in the main, if not all in person at the school.

The counsellor providing support is a Senior Accredited Member of the National Counselling Society, and offers and also a specialist practitioner, trainer and supervisor in loss, grief and bereavement as well as a regional lead trainer for Cruse.

Governor metrics -See Appendix F

Staffing

We started this academic year fully staffed with the addition of 10 teachers, 2 Learning Support Assistants, a Conduct Leader and a part-time receptionist and cleaner. We have also replaced both IT Technicians.

During this term I have observed all new teaching staff with no issues of concern.

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)

The TAGs that were shared with you in July were accepted as final student outcomes.

Careers

We are starting to run events in-house wherever possible. Events this term have included site visits, labour market Information and UCAS workshops. Next up is the very popular ‘What’s My Line?’ with 21 employers supporting the event.

Work experience for Years 11 and 13 takes place during the final week of half-term. Due to the on-going pandemic we are still finding it more difficult to arrange work experience for all students though we have managed to secure work experience for over 50% of the cohort.

We are very grateful to our Employer Group for their continued commitment and willingness to adapt to accommodate the challenges we all face and they were also happy to support us on site at our recent Open evening.

Employer mentoring has continued throughout this term.

Recruitment for T-Levels in 2021 was strong with 13 students starting against our target of 12. We are starting to receive applications for 2022 and are working with employers to arrange industrial placements.

Destinations

All but one of the 58 students have secured a destination and she is being support by Connexions and the UTC. Over half have stayed on at the UTC and 5 have secured apprenticeships.

All 32 Year 13 students have secured a destination or employment. 15 went onto university with Wolverhampton being the most popular destination. 9 have secured apprenticeships, a number of which are with our employer partners.

Details of each student’s destination can be found in Appendix G.

Health & Safety

Standard H&S checks have continued as normal. Extra cleaning is in place for COVID

There has been no fire drill this academic year as we are waiting for the all-weather pitch (AWP) to be handed over at half term as this will be the new muster point. Staff have been given the fire evacuation procedure and a plan of the current muster point so they know where to take their classes. Fire Marshals have been appointed for each area of the UTC to ensure the building is fully evacuated.

H&S Visits

There is now a contract in place with Peninsula to provide an annual safecheck visit, it's a 3-year contract starting in 2021 and the first visit is booked in for the 2nd November. The consultant will be able to check on the alterations made to the building as well as generally checking all our facilities. The consultant will check the necessary paperwork is in place and go around the building to ensure we are compliant with the latest H&S regulations, providing on the spot advice and recommendations so that actions can be taken promptly, the consultant will follow up with a written report. The consultant has been to the building previously and has good knowledge of the school.

GDPR Staff Training

Whole staff training has been undertaken with all staff and this is updated annually to inform new staff of their responsibilities and remind and update existing staff on any new pertinent developments or policy changes. All staff have had the '20 Key Issues for Staff' GDPR document given to them as a simple but effective checklist -see Appendix H. The next whole staff update is due to take place in the first week of November 2021, which should ensure that staff are fully aware of the most relevant GDPR considerations and their responsibilities. John Walker, our Data Protection Officer, has provided a full summer update which is attached to the Governors' papers -see Appendix I.

Use of Personal Emails

Personal email addresses be they Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, or email addresses that people use through their work, no matter how secure they may be through the police, government or any other organisation, are not acceptable to be used for school communications if there is any sensitivity. This applies to teachers, governors, trustees and other volunteers.

End of Principal's Report to the Local Governing Board.

Summary of Annexes Overleaf

Summary of Annexes

- A - Biography for Professor David Proverbs, University of Wolverhampton**
- B - Risk Management Report**
- C - TTMAT Heads Collaboration minutes from September 2021 meeting**
- D - School Improvement Plan (SIP)**
- E - Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)**
- F - Governor Metrics**
- G - Student Destinations**
- H - 20 Key GDPR Issues for Staff**
- I - Summer 2021 Governors GDPR Update**