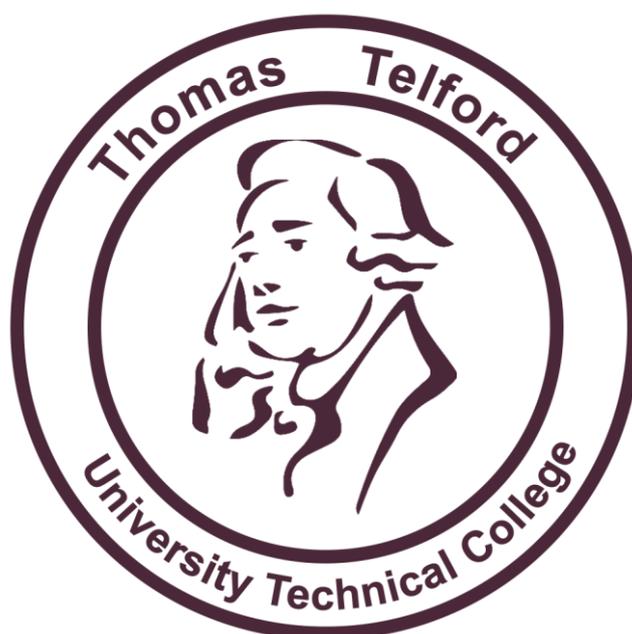


Principal's Report to the Local Governing Board



Prepared by
Av Gill
Principal

For the Local Governing Board's Meeting to be held Thursday 11 March 2021

Item 4: Matters Arising

Actions for the Principal from October 2020 Local Governing Board meeting:

- (i) Review of risk assessment arrangements for staff required to shield

No employee has been required to shield.

BAME staff have had individual Risk-Assessments completed. All staff were asked to come forward if they had any concerns so they could be risk assessed, only one employee came forward and measures were implemented to address their concerns. If individual staff are required to isolate we now have systems in place where teaching can continue remotely as long as cover is in place.

- (ii) Update on recruitment for the Careers provision

Laura Fletcher was appointed to the role of Director of Careers and commenced her appointment on 1st February. Having had a good field for interview we were delighted with Laura's appointment. She has completed both her Careers Leader Qualifications and the L6 Qualification in Careers advice and guidance whilst developing the role in her previous post. Most recently her previous school were awarded the Careers and Enterprise Companies Quality in Careers award. Laura has made an excellent start already and is currently working virtually with each student in Y13 and Y11, offering one to one guidance on their plans for next year.

Laura will be providing invaluable support in our work to increase the breadth of employer engagement, with important developmental work on the processes and procedures for Industry Placements, wider KS3 Careers programme and Work Experience. Laura will also contribute significantly to our development of T-Level Industry Placements.

- (iii) BDT Licence Fee

The Baker Dearing Trust licence fee of £10,000 for the academic year 2020-2021 has been paid. However, we did not agree to the 5-year commitment that BDT were seeking. BDT have since asked for me to go back to our Local Governing Board to re-consider.

- (iv) Review of the UTC's Business Continuity Plan

Director of Operations, Jayne Round, is adapting the UTC's Serious Incident Plan in order to incorporate procedures should we not have access to this building in case of an emergency. These plans include remote learning such as we have had during lockdown. However, some on-site provision will be required for children who are unable to work from home. Ideally, we would want all students to have access to on-site learning but we recognise that this may not be possible in the short term.

Jayne is liaising with the Major Incident and Business Continuity Manager at the University of Wolverhampton to provide accommodation for a limited number of students in the first case.

- (iv) Formulation of emergency lockdown procedures

We had previously concluded that whilst our classroom doors do not lock from the inside it would be very difficult to formulate a sensible lockdown procedure. We have since investigated changing the lock mechanisms to allow doors to lock from the inside and found that it is possible. Over the course of the next month this work will be carried out and on completion an emergency lockdown policy will be written.

(v) Building expansion project

The application for planning for the UTC's expansion went in on 19 February 2021. There is no reason to believe that planning will be an issue as preliminary meetings have been very positive and we have full support from the University of Wolverhampton.

Good progress has been made with the new buildings required to accommodate the planned 1050 students at TTUTC. We have undertaken a series of lengthy meetings with the DfE, Morgan Sindall (the contractor), Mott McDonald (DfE advisors) and Associated Architects and have a site design and building layouts that we are pleased with. The process had been somewhat delayed since September, largely due the original design not providing adequate outside social space for students, but this has now been resolved with a separate sports block away from the new teaching block. Drawings have been shared with governors.

We have always recognised this to be a very tight site, but with creativity many of the issues have been overcome. There was always going to be limited parking onsite and this is still the case.

We have learned much over recent weeks, not least that the DfE will spend as little as possible on providing new school accommodation. As a consequence, there are a number of items that we feel are essential that we are likely to have to fund ourselves and over the coming months we will have better idea to the extent of these costs. For example, the DfE specification does not include the provision of floodlighting for the All-Weather Pitch which would make use for extra-curricular activities impossible. The ICT and FF&E contracts are unlikely to meet all of our requirements but will ensure that all the necessary infrastructure is in place to ensure capacity can be improved in the future.

We are currently engaging in a series of Contractor Proposal Meetings which involve discussions around room layouts, fixtures, fittings, equipment (FFE), finishes and ICT as well as the overall schedule for the programme of works.

(vi) Utilisation of university accommodation

Use of the University of Wolverhampton atrium at the front of building for lunch times (2 x 20 mins) for July and September has been agreed. This will be for when the contractor arrives on site as this will take the UTC's MUGA out of commission.

We had conversations about using the ECMS building for exams though we are not likely to require this space now that normal exams are not taking place. The University has also offered us a room for the academic year 2021-22 to teach a class of T-level students on Wulfruna Street. This offer, though appreciated, was declined due to distance.

The contractor has had conversations with the university about offering the UTC limited parking on their site during the build. Further conversations will be required to ensure a sufficient number of parking spaces are offered.

Introduction

When governors met in October 2020 we all hoped that we were through the worst of everything the pandemic could throw at us. This wasn't the case and we have since entered another lockdown though we were recently provided with a roadmap on a return to school for all students from the week commencing 8 March.

At times like this it is always worth focussing on the positives of which there are many. Throughout the first term the enthusiasm of our new Year 7 cohort was infectious and each day at the UTC was marked by students making progress, high standards of conduct and a fantastic work ethic. Though groups of students were regularly being asked to self-isolate attendance at the UTC remained high. Very few teachers were required to isolate but when they did we had plans in place to ensure that effective learning continued.

I am also proud of our response to the increase in student anxiety, that has been felt by students across the country, through Personal Tutors making weekly welfare calls, the UTC offering counselling where necessary and our whole-school approach to Wellbeing Wednesday, more on this later in this report.

We continue to make good progress in preparation for the 2021-22 academic year with high numbers applying for Year 7 and planning permission has now been submitted for our school expansion.

The UTC continues to work effectively with the Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust (TTMAT) which proves to be a fantastic source of collaboration on items such as the building expansion project, remote learning, lateral flow testing, the return to school and catch-up, budget management and planning for future IT infrastructure. I have included the minutes of the most recent TTMAT Heads Collaboration -see Appendix A.

COVID-19 related matters

Lateral Flow Testing

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) at the UTC has been in place since Christmas. The original goal of LFT was to reduce the numbers of students who are required to isolate. This strategy has since changed and the focus is now on allowing students to return to school and for staff who test positive to isolate.

The process of testing has been set up in a science laboratory and 9 members of our support staff have been trained on various roles. We have set up 3 bays but are currently utilising 1 bay with 4 members of staff and find that we can administer 10 tests in one hour which has allowed all students who are on site to have been tested twice in total as recommended and staff who are on site are tested twice every week. The bottleneck appears to be with registering students which is quite time consuming.

We were recently visited by the school nurse service to carry out a quality assurance of our LFT and they were very happy with our approach.

On the return to school of all students we will be expected to initially test all students three times and will continue to test all staff twice every week. I believe that we would need more than one full school week to complete the process of testing all students 3 times.

Remote learning & catch up arrangements

I am confident that the online learning offer we have made to all students is of a high quality with plenty of live teaching, feedback and support. We are in the process of carrying out quality assurance lesson observations of online learning. During my own observations of the students who are on site I have seen them become more independent learners than they were previously and more confident in the use of Information Technology.

In the current circumstances it has not been impossible to incorporate any kind of catch-up with students. Students will certainly have fallen behind but I believe that careful thought should be given to the timing of increasing their academic offer beyond the norm. The first step should be to go back to the kind of offer we had pre-Covid which includes a provision for intervention and an extended school day.

Student matters including, onsite provision, attendance & wellbeing

During the national lockdown the UTC has remained open throughout, welcoming in the region of 30 students each day who are either children of Key Workers or Vulnerable Children.

A rota of non-teaching staff is in place to ensure students are supervised and that the Y7 students are socially distanced from the Y10-12 bubble. Each student is allocated a computer and headphones so access to online learning is achieved. In addition, a member of SLT is identified as the on-site lead and a member of the safeguarding team is present. There has also been a presence of first aid staff on site at all times. This is to ensure the wellbeing of the students is prioritised.

When providing on-line learning teachers are encouraged to follow the planned curriculum where possible and to also to follow their normal timetable. In addition to this, daily personal tutor sessions of 20 minutes are provided and tutors are also encouraged to talk to parents in order to discuss

progress and carry out welfare checks. Any students working from home who were flagged up to our safeguarding lead then receive follow up calls and targeted welfare support where needed.

Non-attendance is followed up with the usual procedure and absence levels have been low. The numbers on site have gradually increased. As we started to investigate why particular students were not engaging with on-line learning we often found this was linked to high levels of anxiety and therefore invited these students to attend the UTC. Students who were unable to engage with online learning due to IT access issues were prioritised for laptop and/or broadband dongle allocation.

Students attending school have been asked for their views on their time in school during this half term lockdown period. We used the OFSTED student view survey. The key findings of the summary survey are as follows:

- *98% of the students on site agreed that they had enjoyed being in school this half term.*
- *Virtually all of the students on site this half term agreed that there is an adult in school they can talk to if something was worrying them. Only 3 students disagreed and this will be followed up with the individual students by the Welfare Lead.*
- *Of the 29 students who completed the survey, only 3 disagreed that the behaviour of other pupils in school is good, however, all students agreed that staff are good at resolving the poor behavior.*
- *The majority of the students who completed the survey stated that bullying doesn't happen at school with all the remaining students saying that if it does happen, teachers are good at resolving it.*
- *All students stated that they feel safe at school.*
- *All but three of students completing the survey agreed that school has encouraged them to look after their emotional and mental health this half term. The 3 neither agreed or disagreed.*

To support our students and staff wellbeing during this difficult time, Wellbeing Wednesday took place on 10th February to encourage all to take a break from the screen and take time out to connect with themselves and their family. A range of suggested wellbeing activities were provided to home-schooling students and encouraged to share their experiences through pictures sent to the Welfare Lead. In school, all of the attending students engaged with a day of activities alongside staff. Staff and students were very appreciative of the day with lots of positive feedback:

- *"I'd like to say thank you so much for considering a break for us students as this was a break much needed. Doing something other than school work and on the computer helped me feel relaxed..." – Year 10 student*
- *"I'd like to thank you all, especially Mr Gill for supporting us students in this difficult time and caring for our studies and wellbeing at the same time." – Year 10 student*
- *"Thanks again for encouraging us to have a day away from our screens, it was just what we needed." -Year 7 parent*
- *"...thank you for all your thought, time and effort." – UTC staff*

2020-2021 teacher assessment process & current predictions

The government went out to consultation for the mechanism on deciding on final GCSE and A-level and BTEC grades during January 2021. We have not yet a decision on this though we do know that normal examinations will not take place and there has been talk of teacher assessments being used.

See Appendix B for a detailed breakdown of predicted outcomes.

Staff morale & wellbeing

Staff morale has remained as high as can be expected in the circumstances. This has been bolstered by messages of support and thanks from myself, governors and our parent body. Teaching staff have on the whole worked from home with students who are on site being managed by support staff.

Staff were invited to join our approach to Wellbeing Wednesday on 10 February which they appreciated. This was a day when we all agreed to stay off our screens and to not teach the normal curriculum but instead focus on our mental health through appropriate well-being activities.

Governor metrics

See Appendix C

Staffing - Since October we have appointed a part-time Finance Assistant and Director of Careers. We have also replaced our part-time Science Technician and Conduct Leader.

We currently have vacancies for 8 teaching staff ready for September 2021 and are in the process of conducting interviews. We will also lean on Thomas Telford School to provide some teaching in PE and Humanities.

We will also be advertising for 2 Teaching Assistants later in the year in order to appoint for a September start date.

Fire Alarms – Due to COVID restrictions it was decided not to hold a fire drill but to have 2 walk throughs with the 2 bubbles from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4/5. The walk throughs were held and it was clearly explained what the UTC's expectations were.

Careers provision

All Year 11 and 13 are engaging in individual careers interviews with our new Director of Careers. A significant number of Year 11s have applied to our Sixth form and 85% of Year 13 have gone through the UCAS process. However, for many of these students this is not their preferred choice of destination with many still seeking apprenticeships. The Director of Careers is supporting applications with a number of students now going through the application and interview process for these roles.

Schools will be required to meet the Gatsby benchmark for careers from September 2021. The UTC is confident of meeting all criteria once schools return to normal activity. See Appendix D.

We are continuing to work alongside employers to run events wherever possible remotely. Since January we have had a number of external guest lectures within the specialist curriculum, one of which led to a direct offer of Industry Placement to one of our Y11 students. Events have included guest lectures on Project Planning by BAM, Tendering and Estimating by Lovell, Pre-Construction Phase work by St. Modwen, BIM by BAM.

All Year 11 and 13 received a workshop timetable for Apprenticeship week. We have also offered students a number of Virtual Work Experience opportunities through Speakers for Schools and a number of students have taken this up during February half-term.

We have the following plans in place for offering careers provision to our students once all students return to school:

- Our first TTUTC Newsletter to go out to students, Parents, and employers in March
- Careers in the curriculum – A careers badge has been designed for teachers to use in lessons and for students to recognise when careers is being spoken about. Display in classroom, which jobs relate to Math's etc.
- We have a Virtual Work Experience offer being developed by St.Modwen Homes with Speakers For Schools planned for March/April time.
- Tutors will create a display of their students' future aspirations
- Mock interviews planned for National Careers week which will complement guest lectures, resources and site visits as well as:
 - Y7 – Why University? And Which Career? create a mood board of their aspirations, different jobs to be circulated each day.
 - Y10/11/12/13 – Careers Fayre and Careers Story, Virtual Work Experience and
 - Y12 – UCAS Statements, Student Finance and Apprenticeship information events.
- The Unifrog platform (funded for 1 year by Aspire to HE) has been a valuable tool for the students in terms of course information and a single source of apprenticeship opportunities. It has been valuable to the team in preparing UCAS applications. We would like to consider the funding needed to keep this into the future.

Employer engagement

We are very grateful to our Employer group for their continued commitment and willingness to adapt to accommodate the challenges we all face. Employer engagement continues to be strong and relationships are now mature with many employers benefitting from the talent pipeline we have created. We also continue to welcome new members to our Employer Group on a regular basis, with most recent additions including Keon Homes and renewed commitment from Wilmott Dixon who have provided us with an Enterprise Advisor as part of our work with the Careers Hub.

We have several alumni now working and studying with partner companies and within our current Y13 cohort, there is again strong appetite for an apprenticeship route. The impact of the employer engagement programme is also, I believe reflected in the significant fact that our Y13 students intend to pursue their future careers either through University or an Apprenticeship route within the Construction or IT sectors. We have been delighted, despite COVID19 restrictions to work with a range of employers remotely, including two virtual work experience weeks (the most recent with St.Modwen Homes), careers guidance events and guest lectures. Indeed, one of our recent alumni joined Y13 and then Y11 for an assembly about their start with Overbury; a significant number from last year's Y13 have again made contact to ask for copies of our teaching materials to share with their peers at University, as well as coming into the UTC to visit staff and thank them.

We have also received outstanding feedback from Dan Bridgewater, Partner at Baily Garner, who took on two of our Y13 students as degree trainee/apprentice: "We held a recruitment day which involved 28 applicants, 8 of which were invited from the UTC and offered 3 opportunities. One went to an older applicant with a number of years of experience in Construction, the other two went to UTC students. [...] The students from the UTC are simply a cut above what we see from elsewhere. [...] We will be running recruitment events again next year and wish to be able to directly invite all Y13 UTC students to apply.'

Summer 2020 was a disappointing time for those aspiring to apprenticeships as many opportunities were cancelled as employers reeled from the shock of lockdown on their business and current apprentices. A small number of students joined the UTC for a Y14 offer which consists of an additional BTEC qualification and an Industry Placement (CDF Placements) with one of our employers. Despite COVID19, we managed to achieve 4 placements.

It is also of note that Employers and University staff have supported with CPD where teaching expertise in the UTC needed development. As we move to deliver T-Levels, this model of CPD will be very useful, if not essential to our ongoing success. Where a unit of work is supported like this, we ensure that the University and/or Employer logos are included on all teaching materials in recognition and to ensure students perceive these connections.

An update of current provision is provided in Appendix E, using the success criteria suggested by Baker Dearing Trust, this exemplifies the extent of our programme developed to a continuous journey across the 4 years of study with us. On average a student at the UTC will have 32 opportunities a year to engage with employers or University staff, in this 'not' average year we have managed to maintain many of these remotely.

2021 Admissions update including T-Levels

We had 728 students apply for a place into Year 7 which is slightly down on last year but a higher proportion attended testing. Numbers applying for Year 10 and Year 12 are up when comparing to the same time last year. This is pleasing as we have not been able to engage in the normal marketing campaigns. Visiting other schools has previously been the most successful method of student recruitment and this has not been possible this academic year. We have run a number of Facebook campaigns including one for T-levels recruitment.

Work has started on planning Induction Days for new students in the summer term and we are hopeful that we will be allowed to invite whole year groups on site together.

Current recruitment for T-Levels is steady. We have received 7 applications so far, 5 of which are suitable and have been progressed to the next stage. With a team of employers, 4 of those have so far been interviewed. The interviews were a tremendous success and the students performed admirably. We have 11 confirmed T-level placement offers from employers.

Safeguarding matters including, vulnerable children and the current status of DBS checks & child protection training

4 new staff have started at the UTC since the academic year began. These have all received appropriate safeguarding training and introduced to the CPOMS reporting system.

The visiting counsellor is deployed effectively by the DSL and has maintained contact during lockdown with students he was supporting pre-Christmas break (see below). The UTC operates clear and open systems to enable students' timely access to key support, advice and guidance around all safeguarding issues and this has continued during lockdown. PT's have been contacting their groups on a regular fortnightly basis and refer any welfare concerns to the DSL and Heads of Year. Operation Encompass notifications have continued and there has been a slight increase on last term. There was an update to KCSiE in January. The School Safeguarding policy and Addendum to Policy in response to COVID-19 have both been altered to reflect these changes and the Principal and Chair of Governors approved them. Policies have been changed on the website.

The SCR (single central register) is up to date with all new staff included. The DSL and Principal conduct an audit of this every term. DSL and our director of Operations have completed a triangulation of staff records and the SCR. No issues arose.

LA Schools Safeguarding Officer visited to carry out the first interim audit. All previous actions had been completed and actions from this visit are complete. Chair of Governors was present for this visit.

Counselling Analysis September 2020 – 08 February 2021

This academic year has started with an increased number of students receiving counselling support:

Provision has been made to support students via online platforms and telephone (utilising appropriate confidentiality and ethical approach) with the advent of this lockdown which has proved useful for some students but still has difficulties of access and confidentiality for some students due to home conditions, including the perception of online counselling compared to face to face. Where it has been used as a supporting option however it has worked well.

The counsellor providing support is trained for general support but also has specialist training in loss, grief and bereavement as well as being a qualified online practitioner.

Health & Safety report

Peninsula carried out a Health & safety check in August 2020 and this was their final visit -see Appendix F. The focus was mostly on the measures we had put in place re COVID and was also a follow-up to the full Health & safety check carried out in May 2019. There were 2 recommendations which were followed up. All issues highlighted in May 2019 have been addressed (report is available on request).

We no longer use Peninsula for HR. A part of the contract with Peninsula included H&S checks. This will now need to be considered moving forward.

As well as the annual full Health & Safety check we have the following checks in place:

| Item | Supplier | Frequency | Comments |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|---|
| Lift | Otis | Quarterly | Contract in place |
| Fire extinguishers (30+) | Diamond Fire | Annual | Contract in place |
| Fire Alarm | Alarm & Vision | Every 6 months | Contract in place |
| Air Con | Bromyard Building Services | Annual | Contract in place |
| Air Handling system | VES | Annual | Contract in place |
| Scissor lift | Speedy Hire PLC | Annual | Contract in place |
| DT equipment | WSM | Annual | Contract in place |
| BMS | AES | Annual | Contract in place |
| Intruder Alarm | Alarm & Vision | Every 6 months | Contract in place |
| Emergency Lighting | Alarm & Vision | Every 6 months | Contract in place |
| Gas systems | Bromyard Building Services | Annual | Contract in place |
| Electrical Systems | Bromyard Building Services | | Due Nov when building will be 5 yrs old |
| Water systems | Aston Environmental | monthly | Contract in place |

In addition to this the site manager performs weekly checks on the call points, fire doors, emergency lighting and monitors water temperatures.

Issues:

- Potholes on the staff car park. The Site team will be filling these in early March.

- Road markings or a warning sign needed for staff as they leave the UTC car park due to university construction traffic now using the access road.

Building update

A section of the rendering to the rear of the building is turning green with algae while other sections remain clear. This will be remedied by our site manager in early March.

Water remediation works – we still have an unresolved issue with the vinyl.

**End of Principal's Report to the Local Governing Board.
Summary of Annexes Overleaf**

Summary of Annexes

- A - **Minutes of TTMAT Heads Collaboration Meeting January 2021**
- B - **Student Predictions**
- C - **Governor Metrics**
- D - **Gatsby Benchmark Report**
- E - **Effective UTC Sponsor Engagement**
- F - **H&S Report Aug 2020**