



BUCKS UTC

October Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers.

Key Forthcoming Dates:

- **Saturday 15th October:** Open Morning 10am-12 noon, for prospective Year 10 and 12 students (for September 2017).
- **Friday 21st October:** College closes for half term at 3pm.
- **Monday 31st October:** Staff Inset Day – College is closed for students.
- **Tuesday 1st November:** College reopens at the usual time, i.e. students on site for 8.30am.
- **Thursday 3rd November:** Year 10 Parents' & Students' Consultation Evening, 5-7pm.
- **Saturday 12th & 19th November:** Meet the Principal mornings 10am-12 noon for prospective students for September 2017.
- **Thursday 17th November:** Skills Show visit.
- **Sunday 4th December:** Bucks UTC participate in the Christmas Market, Town Centre.
- **W/C 5th December:** Year 11 & GCSE English and Maths resit Mock Examinations.
- **Tuesday 20th December:** Term ends at 1.15pm.
- **Wednesday 21st December-Wednesday 4th January:** Christmas break.
- **Wednesday 4th January:** Staff Inset Day – College is closed to students.
- **Thursday 5th January:** College Term begins. Students to be on site from 8:30am.

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PROGRESS IN OUR FIRST TERM

The College 'settled' quickly at the start of the academic year and I thank all our students for their goodwill as the term progressed; the reality of the assessment system for students in Years 10-13 is that there is no 'easy' year for any of our year groups -

- Year 10 have the spectre of longer and more demanding syllabuses (and work).
- Years 11-13 know that they have important examinations/assessments facing them, for which they need both to prepare fully, as well as to understand current work they are completing to the best of their ability.

For staff there is a challenge of enacting new schemes of work for all our year groups and I am grateful to them for their professionalism and hard work. Within these introductory words my contention is that the college is in a better shape and that we all know more clearly how and where we can contribute to improving the learning and opportunities of all our students this year.

An illustration of our developing practice is the range of new policies which have now been uploaded onto our website for your perusal, including:

- British Values Policy;
- Literacy Policy;
- Marking Policy;
- Numeracy Policy;
- Quality Assurance/Work Sampling Policy;
- Student Disciplinary Procedures (updated);
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy (updated), and
- Teaching and Learning Policy.

Our Website has been reconfigured to ensure that policies are easier to access, and the same is hopefully true of our Development Plan for 2016/17 – in the case of the latter, these can be accessed via the [Policies](#) tab on our homepage.

COGNITIVE ABILITY TESTS (CATs), W/C 17th OCTOBER

A further aspect of our developing practice(s) is that we shall be completing CATs tests with all students of the college in the course of the forthcoming assessment week (w/c 17th October). These tests enable us:

- To identify an individual's cognitive strengths and weaknesses, in order to inform teaching and learning.
- To compare the performance of groups of students, in order to identify needs and to target resources better.
- To identify students, or groups who may be underachieving.
- To inform target setting with regard to Key Stages 4 + 5 examinations and courses.
- To monitor trends or changes in the ability profile of a year group.

CATs have been widely used by secondary schools for over thirty years and are valued for being a better basis for predicting a student's future attainment.

There is no 'preparation' necessary for these assessments and we will still explain their purpose and format to each year group. Not least of all, a further added advantage is that a report will be distributed to each parent/carer immediately after half term, and this will inform on subsequent Student/Parents' Consultation Evening(s).

Finally, in terms of the broader context of the college, can I thank the forty parents who joined us at the start of September for the 'How Students Learn' Evening. It is our intention to host a follow-up evening on the core curriculum (at Key Stage 4) as well as highlighting the many exciting opportunities in both Computing and Construction for all students – this will be early in the Spring Term, with further details to follow in my next newsletter.

STAFFING

We have just one change in terms of personnel, namely we welcome **John Thaxter** to the Science department. I am delighted John has joined us and I know that our students appreciate his deep subject knowledge.

On the staffing front we have two new responsibilities which colleagues have taken on:

Mark Bilsby has taken on a broad-ranging brief for the progress of our Key Stage 4 students.

Tom Byrne has taken on the role of our Data Manager to enable our tracking of the progress of all students to be more informed.

HOMEWORK

Can I remind you that the Learning Resource Centre is available for any student who wishes to complete homework/assignments while in the college until 5pm (Monday-Thursday inclusive): equally it is our anticipation that students must complete homework on time - a timetable has been issued and is available for your perusal.

Please [click here](#), to view and/or download the Homework Timetable.

YEAR 10 PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' CONSULTATION EVENING - THURSDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 5-7PM

It is our practice that the College's Administrative Office will send out information on the above in the week commencing 17th October, enabling parents to book appointments with staff. The first assessment of each student's progress will be available to inform the discussions.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING OVERALL PROGRESS OF THE COLLEGE

The Governing Body quite rightly holds myself accountable for the standards achieved by all our students. As the Development Plan indicated, we have two pivotal documents/processes in this respect, namely -

- The Post-Ofsted Action Plan, monitored by the Teaching and Learning Committee of the Governing Body.
- The Financial Plan (in response to the Notice to Improve), monitored by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

We all take heart from the fact that results at Key Stage 4 improved in 2016; that at 16+ our **Distinction/Distinction☆ Grades remained up to 22% above national averages**, that **recruitment to the college exceeded our targets** and that **our budget is now on track to meet the requirements of the Funding Agency**. We are now in a more secure financial situation, and as both the College's aforementioned plans move forward, we have every reason to be optimistic.

Within the above we need all our students to work with us to maximise their opportunities. We know that the

pace of change in their world is ever-increasing, but equally within our specialist areas are well-qualified staff who can empower every student to be at the cutting edge of practice, and related learning and application. In this respect an important forthcoming 'event' will be the next session led by Elevate (on 24th November) on how every student can become a more successful learner. We are all part of the process of developing our students and building on our clear strengths and applying new processes to inform higher and broader outcomes for every student, we can succeed together.

STAFF TRAINING 2016-17

I am sometimes asked 'what exactly do the staff do on Inset Days' - so I attach the programme for our two days at the start of the academic year, indicating the breadth of work which all staff undertook. It is our intention to spend the next Inset day - Monday 31st October - finalising our performance management processes for 2016/17, for within the targets we agree with staff lie the future opportunities for all our students to experience both a broad raft of opportunities and personal successes. Our evolving Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme is an implicit, important aspect of our collective practice developing - indeed knowing that some parents work in 'related' areas, I would welcome any parent indicating how/where he or she could shape our work in the year ahead.

Please [click here](#), to view and/or download the September Inset Days Programme.



Number of girls studying Construction with Bucks UTC is on the rise!

Bucks UTC is celebrating the start of a very successful new Academic Year in Construction, as the number of girls studying Construction in Year 10 is three-times greater than that of the previous year.

In conversation with five of the girls from KS4 Construction: Lauren, Kinga, Tashai, Dayana and Robyn, they expressed their great ambitions and joy for studying the subject at Bucks UTC. When asked



Computing students to design websites for local charities with Framework Digital

Our Year 12 Extended Diploma students have recently been briefed by Tomas Pukalski, Director of [Framework Digital](#), for an exciting, community-led, web-design project that will see students creating websites for a range of local charities.

The brief is to work in pairs in order to create a website that's fit for purpose using a programme called WordPress – the industry standard for

of what professions they'd like to enter, responses ranged from that of Interior Design, Architecture, and working in the Automotive Industry. Students didn't feel limited by their gender, and spoke largely of how much they loved the course and the atmosphere around them.

"You get to do amazing things here, especially for those who want to express their creativity – Bucks UTC is the best place to come." – Kinga, Year 10, Construction.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Sponsors celebrate Bucks UTC's Third Anniversary

Representatives from Cisco, Intel and Taylor Wimpey joined staff and students at Bucks UTC on Friday 16th September 2016 to celebrate the Third Anniversary of the first students arriving at the UTC.

"Looking back to September 2013, we have to take pride in the number of students who have either secured successful, exciting careers with the College's sponsors or local employers, or have continued on to University" - Ruth Farwell CBE DL, Chair of Governors and also Chair of Bucks New University.

With Level 3 results at Distinction/Distinction☆ being well over 20% above the national averages, the College is clearly catering for a need in the Construction Industry in the Vale of Aylesbury.

The same holds true of the students who progress into employment with Cisco and Intel – *"the opportunities for high-quality applicants are phenomenal and we are delighted to be working closely with the UTC"*, - Matthew Richards of Cisco.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

website creation and content management, with each pair being assigned one charity's website.

"This is an incredible opportunity for our students as it will give them a genuine experience working professionally within the Computing Industry with real clients, plus it's a project that's going to do a lot of good for our community." – Alan Bailey, Head of Computing at Bucks UTC.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Our best Open Evening yet with well over 150 visitors!

On Thursday 6th October, we opened our doors to over 150 people and 69 prospective students in what has been one of the biggest Open Evenings we've ever held and a fantastic start to the new academic year.

We were delighted to have so many people in to have a good look around our facilities and to hear from our staff, students and sponsors. Bucks UTC is clearly making its way on the map.

After a brief introduction from Principal Tony Withell, and Vice Principal Sarah Newall about our curriculum and the UTC-style of learning, guests were given an introduction to our relationship with employer sponsors and industry opportunities by Sponsor and Governor, Matthew Richards of Cisco. Following this, there were student-lead tours of our facilities and many conversations were made from attendees with staff and learners.

"What a fantastic open evening! I have never seen so many bright and budding young engineers in one room. I am so happy that each and every one of you asked all of your questions and saw how fantastic the Bucks UTC experience is..." – Matthew Richards, Cisco Sponsor and Bucks UTC Governor.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

We look forward to the future, knowing that collectively we are impacting upon more students' progress and opportunities.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Welch

A reminder that Key Dates for 2016/17 are available on our [website](#).



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Bucks UTC offers specialist courses in Computing and Construction. It brings together Bucks New University, Aylesbury College and major local employers including Taylor Wimpey, Cisco and Intel in equal partnership, offering students the right skills and motivational, work-related learning experience to improve their employability within the Computing and Construction sectors.