



Thomas Telford UTC

AN EXCITING NEW COLLABORATION FOR WOLVERHAMPTON

Telephone: 01902 872180
Website: thomastelfordutc.com
Email: info@thomastelfordutc.com

Catch Up and Intervention Programme

Staff at Thomas Telford UTC have been asked to give a significant focus to settling students in during the Autumn Term, and within the restrictions still in place due to COVID, return to our rituals and routines around the school and within each classroom. Staff have baselined students understanding - through adjustment to curriculum plans to accommodate the lost learning and the build programme, are addressing gaps identified. For Y7 and Y10 students, we have completed GL Progress tests and CAT4 tests, to ensure we have a good understanding of their attainment on entry to the school.

We have returned to a full programme of events in our UTC Extra session (3:30-5:00pm Monday to Thursday) with Y7 and Y8 students engaging in a full enrichment programme and KS4 and KS5 students engaging with Employer Led projects and targeted interventions within each subject. We also have Y8 literacy and numeracy recovery during this time.

Middle leaders are leading their teams to ensure that interventions are high value. The focus is upon short, 6-week programmes that are led by need rather than class groups. This has the benefit that students are often with another teacher who can deliver the topic in a new way, and often with other students from other classes in small groups.

Staff have provided (and plan to provide) distinct catch-up sessions during school holidays and over occasional weekends to make up lost learning and provide students with the time to make sense of misconceptions from lockdown learning. We have also taken on an Academic Mentor.

Our blended learning strategy is working well, and although never a replacement for face-to-face learning, most lessons are taking place over Teams, with the remainder being recorded video's and electronically provided resources where students or staff are required to isolate due to COVID.

In terms of wider issues, the UTC identify the importance of student aspirations at this difficult time and our role in balancing the messages from the wider media about the economic damage. To this end we have provided individual careers interviews for every single Y11 and Y13 student and strengthened our CIAG provision through the recruitment of a fully qualified Director of Careers. In addition to this we have been keen to maintain our excellent levels of employer engagement and have purchased a license for Zoom, which has allowed a full range of activities such as presentations from industry, virtual work experience and mock interview sessions. We are pleased to see now that Employers are keen to return to face-to-face support with all KS4 and KS5 students allocated a mentor from our employer group. This is important in reaffirming for students the need to remain focussed and work hard, the opportunities that are available and the importance of their exams.

The UTC is using Catch-Up funding to support additional sessions outside of our normal school hours, including sessions in holidays and at weekends. This is highly valuable to students who more than



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anything needs the gift of time to develop their understanding in subjects. We believe that using our own staff is key to this as they understand the students and their current gaps far better than external staff.

Lost learning and adaptations to the curriculum

During the lockdowns we had to change our method of delivery and introduced a remote learning strategy. The strategy included live lessons through Microsoft Teams, setting homework through Satchel One and additional one to one session through Microsoft Teams and Outlook. The school also recorded live lessons and made them available online for all relevant students. There was also an additional amount of parental engagement during the lockdown period due to the circumstances, with all PTs making weekly contact with each tutee. We continue to foster some of these strategies as part of our blended approach where needed, including a greater emphasis on parental engagement, homework on Satchel One and distributing resources on the school Online Curriculum.

In some of the more practical subject areas, the curriculum had to be adapted at short notice to ensure that delivery was possible. This was unfortunate but a necessity and now those areas are having to revisit and consolidate topics as well deliver the practical. This means the sequencing of the curriculum has not been optimal and there is a strong focus on mitigating this. Further to this challenge, in Built Environment the curriculum has needed further adaptation due to the availability of facilities during our build programme.

Post-lockdown and during the new academic year we have found that a number of our students have found it difficult to retain their focus and found it difficult to complete extended written tasks. This includes a focus by middle leaders on regular written tasks, and the scaffolding we use to support these having greater consistency across the school. There is significant ongoing work to motivate students and encourage the students to rediscover the positive work ethics that they demonstrated pre-COVID.

It is also clear that there is not a consistency among students in their understanding, as you would expect in normal years, due to the variation of engagement over time of students during the lockdown period.

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Springfield Campus, Cambridge Street, Wolverhampton, WV10 0JR

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