QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE LEIGH UTC

Name of School:	The Leigh UTC
Headteacher/Principal:	Mr Steve Leahey
Hub:	Leigh Academies Hub
School phase:	University Technical College with Key Stage 3 Provision
MAT (if applicable):	Leigh Academies Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	12/07/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	02/02/2017

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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all Levels	Leading
Quality of Provision and Outcomes	Leading
AND	
Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs	
Areas of Excellence	Accredited
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	N/A
Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	Leading

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

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1. Context and character of the school

The Leigh University Technical College (UTC) opened in September 2014. The school is a member of the Leigh Academies Trust. It is sponsored by the University of Greenwich and a range of employers, including Kennard Engineering, Eurostar, Thames Water, CSB Logistics, Coca Cola European Partners, Dartford Council, Bluewater, and Cory Riverside Energy.

Since 2017 the school caters for pupils from the age of 11 to 19 and specialises in computer science and engineering. The numbers on roll are increasing every year. The school has remained oversubscribed in its first four years of operation. The majority of students are White British. The proportion from a minority ethnic background is growing rapidly, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. A high proportion of pupils are identified as having additional special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Students in the sixth form have weekly home study/work placements. The Leigh UTC runs apprenticeship training for post-18 and upwards for those looking for careers in engineering and digital.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The principal is inspirational. With his leaders, he shares a powerful commitment to securing an ambitious vision for all students' lives. Governors, leaders and managers have very successfully established a culture of high expectations for their UTC provision. They understand the context of their school and, as a result of tenacious levels of support, they provide life-changing opportunities for all students, including some who would otherwise struggle to participate in education.
- Leaders and managers provide an expertly designed curriculum focused on STEM subjects that very effectively meets the needs of employers. They use incisive labour market information to ensure that their curriculum meets national, regional and global STEM priorities. The principal and some governors are involved at government level to influence the future of UTC education.
- Leaders have established very strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations and employers. These include local small and medium sized enterprises as well as international conglomerates. Pathways are clearly defined,

resulting in all students reaching a destination post-16 and -18. The Leigh UTC has recently been authorised to deliver the IB (International Baccalaureate) Middle Years Programme as well as IBCP (International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme).

- Creative and dynamic leadership at all levels focuses on ensuring that the school's ambitions to provide the very highest standards of care and education are made real. As a consequence, students grow and develop important personal and learning skills that prepare them extremely well for the next steps in their education and training, and for life as young adults in modern Britain. Senior students, for example, find their Personal Professional Strategies (PPS) extremely valuable as they learn important life skills, such as writing "an impressive CV" and interview techniques: "PPS has helped me shine through interviews and get jobs."
- Senior leaders have a highly accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and are skilled in securing the full support of staff, students and parents in furthering their endeavours to maintain and continually improve standards. There is an acknowledgement that the UTC is on a strategic journey with a clear understanding of the necessary elements that staff need to focus on. These include effective pedagogies, the introduction of knowledge organisers, the new T levels and digital strategy. The considerable capacity within the Leigh Academies Trust continues to contribute significantly to the pace of improvement.
- The UTC follows the national curriculum at Key Stage 3. All students study computer science at Key Stage 3. More than half of them continue studying this subject at Key Stage 4 and an increasing number at Key Stage 5. Enrichment activities are plentiful and include several sports, the Duke of Edinburgh schemes, music etc.
- The school council has a strong voice. For example, students have been instrumental in accessing vegetarian options in the canteen. Sixth formers support younger students, capitalising on their 'route to success' programme in Year 12. They provide unbiased information and guidance and act as role models for their peers. They are passionate about their extended project qualification (EPQ). A girl in Year 12 explained how building a drone provided opportunities for reflection and collaboration, both of which are highly valued in higher education and employment.
- All the students met with agreed that the Leigh UTC is unique: "What the school is offering around engineering is far superior to any other schools in the area."

2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if…

… leaders disseminated the best practice around students' leadership identified at Key Stage 4 and 5 (mentoring, modelling, etc) across the whole school (Key Stage 3).
… leaders explored avenues to reinforce the music curriculum at Key Stage 3.

3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Teachers ensure that the work they provide progressively deepens students' understanding. Typically, subject content taught is stretching. In Key Stage 3 there is no repetition of content covered in primary schools, unless gaps in knowledge have been identified. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are skilled at explaining and demonstrating. The tangible work ethic promoted through the IB learners' profile attributes ensures that students listen intently, ask questions, take risks and actively engage with new subject knowledge. As a result, students are not fazed when new and challenging content is presented to them as they have inquiring minds.
- Leaders have invested a lot of time and energy around developing teachers' questioning skills. This has paid dividends. In a Year 10 electronic remote lesson, the use of second wave questioning and purposeful assessment for learning opportunities ensured that any gaps in students' knowledge, understanding or skills were quickly identified and addressed. Similarly, in a Year 7 PE lesson, the teacher ensured that students explored their answers in more depth around fitness through digital sports (Chromebook), allowing them to reach their full potential.
- Assessment opportunities allow teachers and students to identify and close gaps in knowledge. Students said that they value these opportunities to improve their work. As a result, they typically act on the advice they receive from their teachers. Teachers have high expectations and require work to be presented to a high standard. Students are diligent and take the utmost care with their work. Students are highly productive and cover topics in depth and detail. They find the knowledge organiser tests useful as it helps them to "remember and know more."
- Teachers regularly use new technologies to enhance their students' learning experiences. Effective practice observed included the use of digital portfolios, learning games and real-time feedback on students' performance. This expertise was invaluable during the lockdown, as observed in Year 10 lessons as their bubble had to be taught remotely.
- Across the curriculum teachers provide students with a wide range of opportunities. In the best lessons, students write accurately and at length as misconceptions are rapidly addressed. This aspect of students' literacy development is a key focus in school. This enables students to construct extended answers proficiently. Frequent and purposeful industry interventions within the curriculum allow students to understand how knowing more and remembering more enables them to do more in real life contexts. This was apparent in the Year 12 Coca-Cola project where students solved an industry problem delivered by the company. One Year 12 student shared: "This school

gives us so much more than a normal school. It offers real-life scenarios which will help us with our careers."

3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if…

… in a minority of lessons, teachers used assessment information more effectively to match their curriculum intents to what students are capable of achieving.

4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Attendance is monitored thoroughly in all key stages. Effective action plans for students with high absence rates are in place and showing strong impact over time. As a result, students' attendance is improving. Persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged students, is reducing.
- The pastoral structure has been developed since 2019 based upon changing cohort profiles and the introduction of Key Stage 3. Behaviour systems have been simplified and centralised in terms of sanctions and positive reinforcements. Consequently, students feel well supported and cared for as they understand implicitly the school's expectations for behaviour and conduct. All students feel able to talk to pastoral leaders or tutors if they have any concerns. Leaders quickly identify students at risk. Students who find school more challenging are thus helped and supported to be successful.
- Disadvantaged students and those with SEND demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards learning. They settle quickly to learning and are keen to engage in the activities that teachers plan for them. They have a thirst for knowledge and routinely question their teachers and classmates to enrich their understanding. The curriculum is broad for all groups. For example, almost all students now study a modern foreign language which is really valued by the STEM industry. All groups gain valuable knowledge, skills and qualifications and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, as they all progress to an appropriate destination at key transition points.
- During lockdowns, leaders took effective action to ensure that staff developed their expertise in how to deliver the planned curriculum remotely, as required. As a result, teachers moved seamlessly to delivering the curriculum online. Appropriate systems are still in place for any pupil who needs to access their education at home due to self-isolation, as observed this week. Plans are in place

to explore how remote learning can support any students during fixed term exclusions to access the same learning as their peers.

4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if…

… as the capacity is growing within the teaching assistants' team, leaders monitored the impact of their deployment to further inform professional development opportunities.

5. Area of Excellence

Business Engagement

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- The UTC has created a culture whereby business engagement is actively encouraged and integrated at all key stages. Long-term relationships have been developed with local and multi-national businesses that come back year after year. They provide mentoring support, work placements, financial support, and workshops/presentations to raise aspirations for students from Year 7 through to Year 13.
- The business partnerships provide opportunities for students to learn about the range of opportunities that exist, not just traditional routes. As a result of this partnership, the UTC have had alumni return to the school to present their experience as apprentices and have presented on different routes into their industries. Business partnerships have been developed through business breakfasts where business partners visit the school and provide an opportunity for students to present projects and network with them.
- Routes to Success week in Year 12 allows students to experience the application and interviews process in their chosen area of industry with business leaders from the relevant sectors. Feedback from this process provides students with confidence for future applications. Year 12 students are also exposed to other various paths through e.g. apprenticeship, higher apprenticeship, university so they make informed choices as they go into Year 13. Year 10 students have also access to opportunities so that they can weigh up the benefits of college, apprenticeship or post-16 study.
- There is repeated exposure to different areas of business throughout the year as part of presentations, assemblies, workshops, such as with Thames Water that

delivered a workshop on mental health, M25 Connect Plus a presentation on women in engineering and Coca Cola that offered a virtual work experience. Whole school projects supported by Thames Water, Bericote and National Grid allowed students to complete projects set by the businesses and present their ideas, as observed during this review.

5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

- Links with business allow students to contextualise their learning to 'real' issues. Students become confident young individuals with the skills set that business partners want. Successful partnerships mean that businesses look to return each year to provide opportunities for the students (and offer employment). Those at risk of NEET receive intensive support resulting in the UTC being below national and local averages for NEET. Former students return to the UTC in a range of roles. They are "giving back" on a regular basis through assemblies, presentations and mentoring.
- Almost all students go on to successfully join the target workforce. The UTC offers a successful T level programme with the business support. All students have secured destinations and Key Stage 5 outcomes are strong. The number of girls engaged in STEM subjects is increasing.

5.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Name: Sandra Fox and Steve Leahey

Title: Business / Careers engagement lead and Principal

Email: Sandra.fox@threleighutc.org.uk and steve.leahey@theleighutc.org.uk

6. Area of Excellence

Post 16 UTC STEM provision

6.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- The Leigh UTC's vision of 'Developing STEM professionals for a future global market' has remained consistent since the UTC opened in 2014. Leaders have strengthened the flow of young people coming into the labour market with the skills and capabilities employers need, particularly for STEM careers. Students can access other routes of study, including degree apprenticeships and university.
- Post-16 students generally join UTC with moderate attainment. The majority of students enrol having completed their Key Stage 4 study elsewhere. Leaders ensure that programmes are suitable for a diverse range of learners and that they get to know students very quickly.
- The UTC has had three available pathways for students for a number of years which are equally popular:
    - The Tech-bacc route - Students to complete the large programme in engineering or computer science, a level 3 mathematics qualification and an extended project qualification.
    - The Academic pathway - Students study two STEM A-levels (usually mathematics and physics), an Extended Project Qualification alongside the large programme in either computer science or engineering.
    - The Professional Pathway - Students set out to complete the IBCP. Alongside their large programme, students complete two IB-diplomas plus a Core consisting of four aspects.
- The UTC launched the T-level in Digital Production, Design and Development in September 2020 which is currently a fourth pathway. T-levels will ultimately replace the large programmes in engineering and computer science.
- Leaders have delivered training around the launch of T-levels to the Baker Dearing Trust and a large number of UTCs. They share best practice at the Association of Colleges. The UTC also sits on the Baker Dearing Trust Technical board sharing post-16 engineering and supports City & Guilds with specification design. The principal supports the Halley Academy in Greenwich with the development of a new engineering department that will eventually teach T Levels.

6.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

- Student attitudes are business-like and the IB philosophy develops inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people across all programmes. Attendance is high and students show strong independence and commitment to their studies.

- Almost all young people progress on the STEM destinations when they leave. The robust careers strategy, practical approach to vocational education and the links with business have afforded students great success in this regard.
- The Leigh UTC supports other Key Stage 5 provisions in a number of ways. Leaders have delivered training for other Leigh Academies Trust schools relating to their post 16 Talent Acquisition and presentations at the national Baker Dearing Trust events for UTCs with regard to post 16 programmes, apprenticeships and T Levels.
- Academic and vocational outcomes are very strong. Students consistently achieve STEM A-level and IB outcomes with high value added. Comparison tables show their value added for A-level as third in Kent (excluding independent schools) for 2019. They were fourth in Kent for 2018; in each case, the small cohort meant that this was not statistically significant.
- Engineering grades are consistently strong. In A-level mathematics the vast majority have achieved the highest grades in both 2018 and 2019. Students achieve strong outcomes in their EPQ which is intertwined with the core curriculum, creating meaningful projects (e.g. an arcade machine with coding allowing functionality, building a barbecue and a basketball simulator).
- The nature of the Leigh UTC and clear STEM focus has resulted in robust recruitment processes to identify the best practitioners. Subject knowledge is excellent. The Leigh UTC is meeting the gender gap national priority by actively recruiting female STEM teachers and leaders who will act as role models for an increasing number of girls.

6.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Name: Mrs Syreeta Martin

Title: Key Stage 5 DOL

Email: syreeta.martin@theleighutc.org.uk

7. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

The school leaders will access support through the hub.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.