

NEWSLETTER, WEEK 15

In many ways it has been a humbling year. I have read so many posts about 2020 and the learnings from this global pandemic. For me it has been the year that has shown me the importance of these two small schools in our one great big community. We may not be neighbours, or have known each other for generations, but it has become clear how much care and respect we have for each other. I see how much effort people make to help each other, even when they themselves are worn out and in need of help and support. The community that has rallied around as we have approached Christmas has made me feel so warm inside. We have been able to share a feeling of love, belonging and care during hard times and hope for the future together.

Rather than share our usual weekly highlights, a few staff have reflected upon their year and some of the special moments for them. There were so many beautiful memories, too many to include – but a few below I wanted to share with you.

Highlights this year...

Emma Weston – teaching lead for Maths and year 11 team says: “It’s been lovely this week to see how many Year 11s are deserving of attendance awards in spite of the challenges of this term. It reminds me how passionate our students are about working now to achieve their futures. I’ve also been so pleased to see how many of them have already responded to advice and guidance given by their teachers during the parents evenings.”

Kevin Dunn – also from Maths says: “In general, I have been overwhelmed by the massive effort Laura Bonnesson and Tom Atkinson have made with the Junior Leadership Team to raise funds, make hampers for local families and organise gifts for the children. They have worked so hard to make sure every student knows they are important to us.”

Phil Forrest – from the Year 11 team says: “For me, I have paused to reflect on the outstanding effort from the students in adapting to the changes that this last term has presented. Students have been a credit to themselves and the school. Amazing team work and resilience”

Katie Small - Assistant Principal and Head of Year 9 says: “Our Ignite students have had a very successful first term at the UTC and Studio school. I have been blown away by what a brilliant group of young people we have here. This has been such a lovely week together with their awards assembly on Wednesday and their Christmas dinner. It was so nice to see them happy and settled and making great progress in their learning.”

Dan Howard - Head of Engineering says: “I think the thing that sticks in my mind as being awesome although quite small was the first time I did my first google meet during the original lockdown with my now year 13 physics students. I think the excitement to have some contact from school was quite infectious, and the desire to learn differently I found quite poignant. The learners have said that they found the online lessons so helpful, not just in terms of content, but actually with interacting with other humans! It has really changed our desire for learning and reminded us that this is a brilliant opportunity.”

James Phillips - Head of Games Design says: “I’ve been amazed at how resourceful we have been this year. We have all pulled together to make out of the ordinary things happen for our young people. We have managed to find ways to keep students learning, delivering laptops, internet dongles and so much more. We’ve also just had amazing news that the Creative Assembly have donated £30,000 to supply laptops to NextGen students nationally. This will make sure a big difference across the country.”

Amanda Cawood says: “On behalf of the safeguarding and pastoral team, I would like to thank you all for your continued support of our engagement with your children. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you during the Autumn Term and it has been really positive to hear your feedback about the pastoral care our students receive here at the school. As always if there is ever any support, information or guidance we can give you in respect of supporting your child please do not hesitate to contact me in school. May we wish you all a restful holiday and a prosperous 2021.”

