



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday 21 November

Women in STEM celebrated on Skills Minister's visit to East London technical school

The Skills Minister has celebrated the contribution of women in STEM on a visit to a Bow secondary school, by meeting young women being prepared for top technical careers.

Jacqui (Baroness) Smith and Stratford and Bow MP Uma Kumaran met students and staff while touring impressive theatrical, engineering, and health facilities at Mulberry UTC on Thursday 20 November.

The visitors also took part in a roundtable with female students from Mulberry and Newham's London Design and Engineering UTC on the importance of young women in STEM.

The visit took place during #thinkUTC week, an annual celebration of the 44 University Technical Colleges (UTCs) across England which this year is running between 17 and 21 November. The week is organised by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust which supports the entire UTC network and also helped organise the minister and MP's visit.

Minister toured theatre, engineering lab and hospital-grade health suite

Baroness Smith and Kumaran were first shown a special exhibition curated by Mulberry UTC students as part of the annual Mulberry Festival of Arts. Then came a visit to the UTC's professional theatre, for a rehearsal of a play performed by performing arts students.

The pair – led by Mulberry Schools Trust CEO Dr Vanessa Ogden CBE, UTC Principal Daniel Seed and Baker Dearing CEO Kate Ambrosi – next dropped in on a lesson in the school's state-of-the-art TV studio.

Students from the Mulberry STEM Academy also showcased their work on constructing an electric car in the engineering lab, which has been developed and sponsored by Mercedes-Benz, which also supported the development of the academy.

The visitors then had the opportunity to visit the UTC's Health Suite, a hospital-grade clinical environment for students studying the adult nursing and midwifery T Levels. The UTC's employer partners from Barts NHS Trust deliver specialist teaching in these spaces, ensuring students gain high-quality, industry-informed training. The minister was even given a blood pressure test by two students.

Dr Ogden led the roundtable with female students from Mulberry UTC and London Design and Engineering (LDE) UTC, as well as several employer partners. This was a lively discussion focusing on the importance of young women pursuing technical skills and careers in STEM and related fields, and on the skills needs of employers.

The external partners who took part in the visit included:

- Sue Barrow, UTC Chair of Governors and a former Deputy Director of Education in Tower Hamlets
- Kieran Kelly, Education Academy Managing Director for Barts NHS Trust



- Simon Stephens, Head of Skills Centre at the National Theatre
- Ailie Smith, the Creative Media Skills Institute at Pinewood Studios
- Geoffrey Fowler, Principal and CEO of London Design and Engineering UTC

UTC students more likely to enter apprenticeships; less likely to become unemployed

In the run-up to the start of #thinkUTC week on Monday, an independent report was published by the influential think tank Policy Exchange, revealing:

- At 18, students from UTCs are more than two and a half times more likely to enter apprenticeships than the average nationally.
- UTCs play an important role in re-engaging young people in education. UTCs have higher proportions of students eligible for free school meals and with SEND needs, but have fewer students not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- UTCs have established a track record of supporting and transforming the lives of young people through technical education.

The report was endorsed by former education secretaries David (Lord) Blunkett and Gillian Keegan, and the Liberal Democrat education spokesperson in the Lords, Mike (Lord) Storey, as well as Manchester mayor Andy Burnham and Cambridgeshire mayor Paul Bristow.

Dr Vanessa Ogden CBE, CEO of Mulberry Schools Trust, commented:

“Mulberry UTC represents a powerful model of high-quality technical education – one that is ambitious, industry-aligned and driven by a commitment to widening access for young people, especially girls, into health, creative sectors and STEM. We are pleased to showcase how strong employer partnerships, specialist facilities and a rich curriculum can ensure students develop the skills, confidence and expertise needed for future careers. We welcome the minister’s interest in this work and the national conversation about growing UTC provision and ensuring girls can see – and secure – their place within it.”

Daniel Seed, Principal of Mulberry UTC, commented:

“We are proud to demonstrate the exceptional work of our students and staff, underpinned by meaningful collaboration with employers, universities and professionals working at the heart of industry. Today’s visit highlights the strength of our approach and the opportunities it creates for students to learn, practise and innovate in professional environments. As a UTC, we are committed to ensuring girls see technical education as a pathway where they can thrive, progress and lead across a wide range of sectors.”

Kate Ambrosi, CEO of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust commented:

“It was excellent to join Baroness Smith on a visit to this incredible University Technical College.”



“The students and staff ably demonstrated how UTCs such as Mulberry and LDE prepare young people with the knowledge and ability to lead fulfilling lives and to work for local employers.

“This is done with fantastic facilities, expert staff, the support of local employers, and our UTC model, which provides a blueprint for delivering high-quality technical education for young people. As proven by the recent Policy Exchange report.”

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About the Baker Dearing Educational Trust and University Technical Colleges

The Baker Dearing Educational Trust works to empower young people with a high-quality, employer-led technical education through England's 44 University Technical Colleges and with our partners. Baker Dearing also delivers technical education opportunities for young people, such as the Baker Award for Technical Education.

Described as the “gold standard in employability,” University Technical Colleges deliver a specialist science, technology, or creative curriculum at a secondary school level. Each UTC works with a university sponsor and employers, who help design the curriculum to ensure it meets industry needs while also providing work placements, industry projects, and mentoring for students.

More information is available from <https://bakerdearing.org/>