

University Technical College Norfolk

Old Hall Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 6FF

Inspection dates

14 to 15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal is fully committed to providing pupils with the skills, knowledge and confidence to progress successfully on to the next phase of their education, employment or training. Staff implement this vision well. As a result, the quality of education has improved since the school's previous inspection.
- The careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provided to pupils are of a very high quality. Staff provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities and experiences that support them to make informed decisions about their future careers. Progression rates are high.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school's curriculum is a key strength. They work very closely with their Industry Liaison Group (ILG) to ensure that the curriculum reflects local and national employment needs and opportunities.
- Governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths. They provide leaders with effective support and challenge that ensure that the school continues to improve.
- The sixth form has improved rapidly over recent years. Students are very positive about the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that are available to them.
- The overall progress that pupils make has improved. Pupils now make strong progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming. There have been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well looked after and that they are kept safe.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders use additional funding for these pupils effectively to ensure that they make strong and increasingly better progress.
- The quality of teaching is typically good. However, some learning activities are not closely matched to pupils' starting points, and teachers' expectations for the quality of presentation in pupils' work are not consistently high.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium grant to support improvements in pupils' progress. However, they have not evaluated different initiatives closely enough to maximise the impact of this additional funding.
- Pupils' progress in science is not as strong as in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - accurately assess, and provide challenging learning activities that are closely linked to, pupils' starting points
 - implement consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.
- Ensure that high-quality teaching enables pupils to make progress in science that is similar to that made in other subjects.
- Improve the rigour of planning for the pupil premium grant by including clear and measurable outcomes that enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of individual initiatives more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal is highly committed to ensuring that the school is successful in meeting its intended purpose of developing engineers and technology specialists of the future. Leaders have been effective in reviewing and restating the school's ethos to pupils, parents and employers. As a consequence, pupils now join the school with a clearer understanding both of the curriculum requirements and of leaders' expectations of them. Governors, teachers and other adults share the principal's vision. As a result of their combined work, the quality of education has improved since the school's previous inspection.
- The school's work with employers is a key strength. The ILG consists of more than 50 employers and is used very well by leaders to routinely review the school's curriculum. Leaders work with this group highly effectively to ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to develop the appropriate technical and personal skills to allow them to progress on to their next steps of education, employment or training. Leaders also ensure that employers play a key role in supporting the delivery of the curriculum. For example, employers provide Year 12 pupils with individual coaching sessions as part of their weekly 'core project'.
- A significant majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are supportive of the school and would recommend it to other parents. One parent, reflecting the views of others, wrote, 'A fantastic and inspirational learning environment. Students are encouraged and guided in reaching their full potential.' Another stated, 'This school has transformed my son from a child reluctant to attend school to one that is happy and eager to learn.'
- Staff morale is high. Middle leaders said they are valued, supported and empowered to make decisions. They value the training that they receive. All of the large number of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire agree that the school has improved since the last inspection, that it is well led and managed and that they enjoy working there.
- The school's curriculum is well-focused on its core purpose and it is clearly communicated to stakeholders. Pupils study an appropriate suite of subjects, they receive high-quality CEIAG and they have many opportunities to interact with a wide range of employers. Enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular activities, such as university and industry visits, provide pupils with further opportunities to consider their next steps. As a consequence, pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 move on to a range of high-quality destinations.
- Leaders know their school well and they review its effectiveness routinely. They are accurate in their assessment of the school's strengths and in the identification of areas for development. Improvement plans include demanding and appropriate targets that leaders and governors review routinely.
- Leaders are effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to understand and celebrate differences, to support each other and to reflect on their own actions. Fundamental British values, such as

democracy and the rule of law, are embedded within the school's culture.

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning that are faced by pupils with SEND. They understand their needs, track their progress closely and provide them with additional support when needed. Leaders use the additional funding they receive to provide pupils with access to a wide range of support and to enable them to participate in additional educational activities.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this evaluation to ensure that staff receive high-quality training that both develops their individual areas of need and supports whole-school goals. Although the overall quality of teaching is good, some teachers have low expectations about the presentation of pupils' written work and some do not base the work they set on a clear understanding of what pupils already know and can do.
- The pupil premium grant has been used effectively to provide pupils with additional support and access to extra-curricular activities. Leaders monitor the progress of this group of pupils closely and modify the support offered to individual pupils as and when necessary. As a result of leaders' actions, the overall progress of this group of pupils has improved. However, leaders do not review the impact of individual initiatives closely enough. It is not clear whether all initiatives have the same level of impact, or if some are more effective than others.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well trained in relation to their specific roles. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses through their attendance at governing body meetings. In addition, governors attend a range of sub-committees and visit the school routinely. They provide leaders with effective challenge and support.
- Governors ensure that their legal duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met. The link safeguarding governor checks safeguarding arrangements, including the record of pre-employment checks, routinely. Governors receive valuable training that helps them to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe.
- Governors have a clear vision for the future development of the school, including plans for the school to join a multi-academy trust from September 2020.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand, and follow, leaders' clear procedures for reporting any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are logged effectively. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that child-protection referrals are dealt with appropriately. The maintenance of child-protection files is effective, and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need quickly.

- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils are taught well. Pupils who met with inspectors said that they enjoy their lessons and make good progress. The overwhelming majority of staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire agreed that they are supported to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.
- Teachers question individual pupils skilfully. Teachers provide pupils with specific, helpful guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to challenge pupils and to provide additional support, where necessary.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear explanations of important concepts. As a result, pupils develop key knowledge that they build on over time. Pupils acquire subject-specific vocabulary well throughout the school.
- Teachers often successfully link subject areas, such as English and humanities, to the school's core curriculum offer. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils were able to successfully evaluate the challenges of constructing a pipeline over difficult terrain.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Pupils are confident to answer questions and to get involved in discussion. They are not afraid to make mistakes, and they ask questions whenever they are unsure. As a result, pupils' misconceptions are clarified quickly.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils with SEND. They plan closely with teachers and they understand the needs of the pupils that they are supporting. Their effective questioning and explanation of tasks support pupils with SEND to make strong and improving progress.
- There are a small number of examples, including in science, where teaching is less effective. Where this is the case, learning activities are not always closely matched to pupils' starting points, and questioning is not always effective in checking what pupils know and understand. In these situations, the attitudes to learning of a minority of pupils are less positive than at other times.
- Teachers' generally high expectations of pupils are less evident when examining pupils' workbooks. There is more variation in the quality of presentation of pupils' work than there should be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well supported in their transition between their secondary school and the University Technical College Norfolk (UTCN). Many pupils travel far to get to UTCN and some pupils have faced difficulties in their previous schools. Leaders' effective transition processes ensure that pupils now have a clear understanding of what to

expect, and what is expected of them.

- Pupils say that they value the opportunities that they are offered at UTCN. They have a clear understanding of the options that are available to them at the end of their studies, and they are grateful for the high-quality CEIAG that they receive. Pupils' personal development is well supported by a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities in which they participate.
- Pupils are well looked after, and they are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations. They told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that they have the confidence that staff will help them if they have a worry or a concern. Pupils also said that there is little bullying in the school. They said that when it does happen it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' overall behaviour in lessons is good. They follow the instructions of their teachers and they work hard. Pupils' overall attitudes to learning are also good. There were a small number of examples where the attitudes to learning of a minority of pupils were less positive than their classmates.
- Pupils move around the school in an orderly and respectful manner. They congregate in small social groups, both within the school grounds and inside the buildings, at both breaktime and lunchtime. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- Punctuality, both at the beginning of the day and throughout it, is good.
- Leaders have robust procedures in place to support pupils' attendance. Pupils' rates of attendance are in line with national averages.
- The number of pupils receiving fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly year-on-year and is now in line with national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' overall key stage 2 prior attainment is broadly average. However, UTCN pupils spend at least three of their five years of secondary education at other schools, before joining UTCN at the start of Year 10.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining a good pass in both English and mathematics at GCSE was in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils attaining a strong pass in both subjects was above average.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils rose sharply in 2018. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils attaining both a good and a strong pass in English and mathematics was broadly in line with their peers nationally.
- Pupils make good overall progress from when they join UTCN. They make particularly strong progress in English language, English literature and engineering. Progress in science is not as strong as in other subjects, because the quality of teaching is weaker in that area.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good overall progress from their Year

10 starting points. Pupils with SEND also make strong overall progress against the broader targets in their individual plans.

- In Year 11, there is no significant variation in the good overall progress made by pupils with different levels of prior attainment. In Year 10, high prior attaining pupils are also making good overall progress. Middle and lower prior attaining pupils in Year 10 have got off to a quicker start since joining UTCN and are making stronger progress.
- CEIAG is highly effective in supporting pupils to have high aspirations and to be well prepared for the next stages of their lives. Pupils are provided with a very wide range of independent advice, employer engagement opportunities and work experience placements. In recent years, all pupils have left the school with a position in education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders of the sixth form have an accurate understanding of its strengths. They are proactive in tackling underperformance and their actions have had a positive impact on students' progress.
- Students' progress in vocational subjects has been broadly in line with national averages in recent years. Students' progress at A level has improved significantly over recent years and is now in line with national averages. The progress of current students is continuing to improve.
- Students who have not achieved a good pass in GCSE English or mathematics before joining the sixth form are supported very effectively to gain these qualifications.
- Strong teaching challenges students' thinking. Teachers involve students in high-level discussions that refine their understanding of key concepts and enable them to make links across different topics. Students develop good relationships with their teachers. This gives them the confidence to take risks, learn from mistakes and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- CEIAG in the sixth form is highly effective. Students are supported to make appropriate course choices when they join the sixth form. They then go on to receive a very wide range of mentoring, support, work experience and trips to higher education institutions. In recent years, all students have moved to sustained employment, education or training at the end of their studies.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard in lessons and they contribute to the wider life both of the sixth form and of the main school. For example, Year 12 students act as mentors in key stage 4 lessons. Students spoke positively about the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that are on offer to them, and of the individualised support that they receive from sixth-form staff.

School details

Unique reference number	141086
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10088684

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ben Milner
Principal	Alex Hayes
Telephone number	01603 580 280
Website	www.utcn.org.uk
Email address	office@utcn.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 November 2017

Information about this school

- This is the school's first section 5 inspection since it was judged to require improvement in March 2017.
- The school is smaller than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who receive support is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium or who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school uses St-Eds to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed learning in 34 lessons, or parts of lessons.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection to assess both the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in class and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils in formal meetings to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors made visits to morning registration sessions.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their records about behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 85 responses and 25 free-text comments made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 35 responses by staff to the Ofsted staff questionnaire, and the 91 responses by pupils to the Ofsted pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Gee, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Diana Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Rob James	Ofsted Inspector

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