

Black Country UTC

Vernon Way, Sneyd Lane, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 2PA

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students' achievement is inadequate because the standards they achieve are well below the national average and should be higher.
- Teachers have low expectations of what students can achieve. Much teaching is weak and students are not making enough good progress.
- Students do not receive enough feedback on their work and so do not know how to improve it.
- Students do not feel safe because of poor behaviour in lessons and on the corridors.
- Attendance is well below average and any systems in place to improve students' attendance are not working.
- Leaders do not analyse achievement, attendance, and behaviour patterns for different groups of students well enough and so are slow to intervene to improve standards.
- Leaders do not provide effective training to improve the quality of teaching and the way students' behaviour is managed.
- Governors and sponsors do not understand how well students are doing at the college so they do not have the knowledge to hold leaders to account. They have failed to tackle the underperformance of staff, including that of leaders.
- Staff do not effectively manage students' behaviour. There are too many incidents of low level disruption and some students do not do what teachers ask of them.
- Leaders do not keep careful records related to the safeguarding of students and actions taken.
- There is no provision to develop students' moral, social, spiritual and cultural well-being.
- The sixth form is inadequate. Standards are very low and some students are not on appropriate courses.

The school has the following strengths

- The new Principal has brought an ambition to drive up standards and improve achievement. He has introduced better systems to track information about how well students are doing.
- In engineering there are good opportunities for students to work with employers who have supported the design of assignments so they are specific to the workplace.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons including short visits to lessons; some observations were with senior leaders. Inspectors visited form time, and observed students during breaks, lunchtime, and around college at the start and the end of the day.
- Inspectors met formally with three groups of students, and also spoke to students in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, other senior and other middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors and representatives from the sponsors.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire to inform the inspection. The views of 6 staff that completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire were analysed.
- A variety of information was analysed about examination results, students' attendance, behaviour and current progress information. The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation to include college development plans, a self-evaluation report, external reviews, records related to keeping students safe, and a letter to inspectors received from students at the college.

Inspection team

Helen Reeves, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Bob Busby

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mel Ford

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The college was set up in 2011 as a University Technical College (UTC) sponsored by Walsall College and the University of Wolverhampton.
- The college is due to move into new purpose built premises in 2016.
- Students are admitted from local schools in Year 10 or Year 12.
- A new Principal was appointed in September 2014.
- There are 158 students on roll, considerably smaller than most schools.
- Less than a fifth of the students at the college are girls.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after) is broadly in line with average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special education needs is below the national average.
- The majority of students are White British.
- Students study engineering for a substantial proportion of the week.
- The college day is much longer than in most secondary schools.
- The college is receiving support from John Taylor High School in developing teaching and learning. The college also receives support from its sponsors in managing the new build and developing teaching and learning.
- A small number of students attend courses away from college at Walsall College, NOVA and MAP training providers.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form so that it is at least good, to ensure all students make good or better progress by making sure that teachers:
 - make better use of information about what students already know and can do to plan activities that supports their good learning
 - provide students with regular feedback on their work that helps them to understand how to improve it by giving them more precise guidance
 - provide activities that students find interesting to help eliminate low level disruption
 - make better use of other adults in the classroom to support disabled students and those with special educational needs
 - make better use of questioning that requires students to think hard and reflect on their learning.
- Urgently improve behaviour so that students feel safe and are able to learn by:
 - establishing clear expectations of the required standard of student behaviour in lessons and around the building
 - establishing systems to support staff in the implementation of those expectations.

- Improve the attendance of all groups of students, including in the sixth form to at least the national average by:
 - implementing robust systems to track and monitor students' attendance, so that interventions can be put in place quickly to reduce the proportion of students not attending the college each day.

- Improve the quality of leadership at all levels and governance, so that leaders have a greater impact on students' outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that governors and sponsors develop the skills to make better use of reports on students' progress, behaviour and the quality of teaching so they can be more effective in holding leaders fully to account
 - ensuring there are clear lines of accountability in the leadership of subjects and other key areas, including the sixth form, so that all leaders are clear what their responsibilities are and what they should be doing
 - urgently introducing a strategy to ensure that pupil premium funding is spent on disadvantaged students to improve their achievement
 - analysing information about students' achievement and behaviour across the college including the sixth form more thoroughly and using this to implement actions that lead to improvement
 - implementing a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching throughout the college resulting in a programme of individually tailored support to improve weak teaching
 - making sure that students have access to high quality careers advice and impartial information about courses to ensure that students begin the sixth form on a pathway that meets their needs
 - ensuring that students', spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well-planned within the curriculum
 - urgently improving the quality of record-keeping related to the safeguarding of students
 - ensuring every opportunity is explored to recruit high quality permanent teachers
 - urgently reviewing the structure and timings of the day to ensure that all available lesson time is used to support students' progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders, including governors and the sponsors, have not addressed low standards, poor behaviour, low levels of attendance and weak teaching in the college. There is no evidence of improvement in these areas and some have declined.
- There is a lack of clarity about where responsibility lies for different subject areas and other aspects of college work. As a result, many aspects of the college's work lack strategic direction. For example, no-one has responsibility for the sixth form.
- Leaders have not developed sharply individualised programmes to improve weak teaching. Recent whole staff training has had limited impact on improving the quality of teaching. For example, training to help teachers plan lessons that meet the different needs of groups of students have not changed the regular practice of most teachers.
- Subject leaders lack confidence in using information about students' achievement to improve the quality of teaching. They do not monitor the quality of teaching or tackle the underperformance of teachers in their areas of responsibility.
- The college has struggled to recruit enough permanent teachers. Consequently students report that in some subjects they have had frequent changes of teacher which has significantly disrupted their learning.
- Leaders do not have an effective strategy to improve the behaviour of students in lessons and around the building. Inspectors observed confrontations between staff and students, students refusing to follow instructions and students wandering in and out of lessons.
- Leaders do not make the best use of students' time during the college day and have not succeeded in establishing a culture of learning. For example, all students, including those in the sixth form, are expected to attend a compulsory one hour study period at the end of the day. Although designed for independent study and the completion of homework, few students undertake these activities. Most students play computer games, or chat. Students who do want to study at this time find it difficult because of the poor behaviour of others.
- The college records incidents of bullying. However, records do not provide sufficient detail of these incidents to allow leaders to identify patterns and intervene if necessary.
- There are now better systems in place to track the progress of Year 11 students. However, the accuracy of this information does not consistently match what is seen in lessons. In science the quality of this information is more reliable as it is externally checked. For example, recent assessment in Year 11 were checked by staff from another high school.
- Leaders and governors do not review the performance, attendance and behaviour of different groups of students in each year group well enough, to lead to improvements, and so they are unable to make appropriate provision to meet the needs of all groups of students. For example, leaders are taking no action to ensure that the small minority of girls within the college have a voice therefore limiting their chance to have their needs met. As a result the college has not promoted equality of opportunity for these students.
- Leaders have not used the pupil premium funding effectively. There is no record of how the money is spent and no analysis of its impact on the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- As a UTC the curriculum has a strong emphasis on engineering. Students also have access to a range of other subjects in addition to English, mathematics and science. These include history, German and physical education, thus providing a balance of subjects.
- Not enough is done to promote students' personal development. As the college does not have a formal curriculum in place for personal, social and health education, students do not have enough access to information about sex and relationships, drugs awareness and keeping themselves safe. There are also very few opportunities for students to explore other faiths and the importance of tolerance. As a result, students are not well prepared for the role they will play in modern Britain. Students have limited access to appropriate careers advice and guidance.
- Leaders are in regular contact with providers to track the attendance, behaviour and achievement of students attending courses away from the college. However, leaders have not ensured that all students have access to full time education.
- The Principal understands the key issues facing the college. He has developed an improvement plan and actively sought support from other schools to increase capacity. It is too early to measure the impact of these actions. He has also put in place a more rigorous performance management system where teachers' pay awards are linked to students' achievement.
- Leaders follow appropriate procedures in the safe recruitment of staff. Arrangements to keep students

safe meet statutory requirements. Leaders take necessary action when concerns are raised about the safety of students including involving external agencies. However, the quality of record-keeping is weak.

- Inspectors strongly recommend that the college should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The sponsors have failed to act quickly to address very low standards and poor behaviour. They have not ensured that all college leaders have the capacity to address these issues. Since the arrival of the new Principal, they have taken some steps to provide additional support. For example, Walsall College has now undertaken to manage all aspects related to the new build and provide additional mentoring for the new Principal. The University of Wolverhampton provides additional support for developing teaching and learning across a range of subjects.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is ineffective. Governors do not have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They have failed to secure improvements in students' achievement, behaviour and attendance or to make sure that students feel safe in the college.
- Governors have limited understanding of the different information available to them about students' achievement across the college. They have not accessed suitable training to enable them to ask the right questions and provide appropriate challenge for college leaders.
- Governors do not understand the extent of the weaknesses in teaching and have not held leaders to account for driving improvement in this area.
- They have not addressed weaknesses in leadership. When concerns in the quality of leadership have been identified they have failed to act quickly enough to resolve these issues.
- Governors have not monitored the spending of the pupil premium funding.
- Governors have put in place robust performance management for the Principal with the support of an external adviser. However, they have not routinely been involved in the decision to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance of other staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is inadequate.
- In lessons, students often arrive late and are slow to settle to learning, so valuable lesson time is lost.
- On occasions lessons are disrupted because students are unwilling to follow the instructions from their teacher and walk out of lessons without permission. This type of behaviour makes it difficult for students who behave better to get on with their work.
- Last year 17% of students experienced at least one fixed term exclusion from college. This is much higher than national levels. The alternative strategies leaders have developed are too recent to have had a substantial impact on managing behaviour and therefore the levels of exclusion remain too high.
- Some students do not behave well around the college. There is pushing and shoving in corridors and some students show a lack of respect towards their classmates and staff.
- Some students have a lack of enthusiasm for their learning and too few students participate positively in the college's expectation of study time.
- The behaviour of sixth form students in lessons and around the college reflect more positive attitudes towards their study, they are good role models for the younger students. Sixth form students are smartly dressed and polite.
- The behaviour and attendance of students who attend courses away from the college is regularly reported to the college and they take action when concerns are identified.

Safety

- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate.
- Students report that there is inconsistency in the management of behaviour in classrooms that leaves them feeling unsafe. Some teachers do not challenge students when they behave badly.
- Students have not been taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, students explained that they have not had any lessons about internet safety or relationship education.
- Students say that bullying is infrequent. When bullying occurs it is quickly dealt with.
- Attendance is well below average for all groups of students and is declining. The systems that are in place to monitor attendance do not allow leaders to adequately track different groups of students so that

patterns can be identified and action taken to improve students' attendance.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching has failed to secure good progress for students. The quality of teaching varies considerably but there is too little that is of good quality.
- Teaching fails to engage and enthuse students. Teachers' planning does not take account of what students already know. As a result, some students are not challenged by, or interested in their work and become distracted and unsettled.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low. Work is often too easy and simply occupies students' time rather than moving learning forward.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is generally poor. It is infrequent and students are frustrated at how little helpful feedback they receive. They are also concerned that some teachers do not take good care of their books and some have been lost. Better marking was seen in some areas, for example, in German, where students are expected to respond to the teachers' marking and workbooks show that progress is more evident.
- The quality of handwriting, technical drawing and labelling of diagrams in books is poor and goes unchallenged by some teachers.
- The development of students' reading, writing and number skills is not given enough prominence when teachers plan activities. Poor spelling, punctuation and use of technical terms are often not corrected.
- Teachers do not use questions well to help students develop a deeper understanding of their work. Too few teachers manage to get students to think hard about their learning. However, in history skilful questioning prompted students to generate their own questions and provoke further discussion.
- In engineering, good links were developed between theoretical understanding and their individual practical activity. However, some students were unable to take full advantage of this as they struggle to complete activities where they are expected to work on their own.
- Where teaching is more effective, students are engaged and contribute well to their lessons.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- In 2014, only 21% of students achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A* to C grades. This is well below the national average and was considerably less than leaders had predicted. No disadvantaged students achieved this measure.
- In 2014 the number of students who made the expected levels of progress in English and mathematics was well below the national average and very few students made more than the expected levels of progress. The proportion of disadvantaged students making the expected progress from their starting points is far lower than the progress made by other students nationally.
- Disadvantaged students achieved almost a grade lower than their classmates in English GCSE. When compared to other students nationally this gap widened from the previous year to just over a grade. In mathematics the gap between disadvantaged students and their classmates is one and three quarters of a grade and is two and a half grades lower when compared to students nationally.
- In 2014 the small cohort of most able students did not make enough progress and very few achieved the highest grades. Currently these students are not challenged in lessons and therefore do not gain the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve the highest examination grades.
- The college's current tracking records about the achievement of Year 11 students indicates they are making better progress in English, mathematics and science. However, the quality of work in students' books does not fully support this, with too much work that is of a low standard.
- Current progress information indicates that disabled students and those with special educational needs are making inadequate progress. They do not receive targeted support in lessons to help address their needs.
- No students have been entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The college tracks the progress information for students who study courses away from the college. This indicates that students will attain qualifications only in English and mathematics.

The sixth form provision**is inadequate**

- Achievement in the sixth form is inadequate. Students do not make enough progress from their starting points and standards in A levels and vocational courses are low.
- Provision is made for students who have not yet gained a grade C or above in GCSE English or mathematics to study and resit their qualification. The last national results show that students were successful in gaining their grade C or above in English, however, none of the students attained a grade C or above in mathematics.
- Leadership and management in the sixth form is inadequate. There is no identified senior leader for the sixth form. As a result, the quality of tracking of students' progress is poor and there is little intervention when students fall behind.
- Sixth form students are good role models for younger students and their behaviour reflects their more positive attitudes to learning.
- Attendance in the sixth form is very low. Leaders have not taken action to rectify this and as a result they are unable to be assured of the safety of these students.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. In the sixth form the quality of teaching varies considerably and weaknesses in teaching are similar to those in the whole college.
- Students are not guided onto appropriate programmes of study. A number of students are on courses that are too hard for them and they are unlikely to be successful. The lack of effective tracking means that these students have not been identified quickly enough to allow them to move to more appropriate courses.
- The college provides the opportunity for all students to participate in work experience with local providers. Students have many opportunities to meet and work with employers throughout their time in the sixth form. Employers have supported the design of assignments so they are specific to the workplace.
- Students who intend to apply to university are well supported with their applications. Students who intend to follow other pathways, for example apprenticeships, receive less guidance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136933
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	442601

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ndy Ekere (acting)
Headteacher	Paul Averis
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2013
Telephone number	01922 470763
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	office@blackcountryutc.co.uk

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