

# Silverstone UTC

Silverstone Circuit, Towcester, NN12 8TL

## Inspection dates

29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well at the UTC. They are articulate, confident and focused. Students are highly regarded by the local business community and well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Students make excellent progress in GCSE English and mathematics from their various starting points. Disadvantaged students are doing even better than their peers.
- Students who have previously underachieved in education also make rapid progress in English and mathematics.
- Students make good progress in vocational courses related to high performance engineering.
- The sixth form is good. Students receive excellent support and guidance from the highly respected head of sixth form and benefit from good and sometimes outstanding teaching. All students in Year 13 have secured university offers, places in higher education, employment or apprenticeships.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers provide good levels of challenge for students of all abilities and, in nearly all subjects, use their strong knowledge of assessment criteria very effectively to ensure pupils are well prepared for external examinations.
- Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching and students' progress very closely. Rigorous systems are in place to manage the performance of staff and to ensure teachers' pay is closely linked to students' achievement.
- Governance is strong. Governors and trustees provide good levels of challenge to the senior leadership team. They ensure they are well informed about the quality of the UTC's work, including through reports commissioned from external consultants including from practising headteachers.
- Leaders and managers ensure students are safe; they provide exceptional support for the most vulnerable students.
- Students' behaviour is good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the pace of learning is too slow and results in a few students sometimes chatting as they work. This means they do not get as much work done as they could. Marking is not consistently strong.
- Previous weaknesses in teaching and assessment in the business and technical events management courses mean that some students have had to repeat work to ensure they meet their targets.
- Some students are not as skilled as others in making the most of the curriculum time the UTC devotes to personal study.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, do not always communicate with parents as well as they could.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, including observations with senior leaders. During these observations, inspectors looked at students' work and talked to them about it. They also looked at the latest information on the progress of students in the class and checked this against the quality of their work. A sixth form assembly was also observed.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, vice principals and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the Silverstone UTC Trust.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with groups of students from all years, including an additional meeting with a group of girls. They also met with disabled students and those who have special educational needs as well as individuals whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable. Inspectors observed students' conduct and behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes and spoke to a range of students informally as they moved between lessons or engaged in private study.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the UTC's funding agreement, information on students' achievement, the UTC's self evaluation and development plan and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safety. They also looked at reports from the Department for Education adviser's visits to the academy and reports on the moderation of students' work completed by examination bodies.
- Consideration was given to the 84 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as data from the UTC's own parental surveys. Inspectors also spoke to two parents by telephone and considered two letters received from parents. They also considered the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised an extensive range of correspondence from local employers.
- Towards the end of the inspection, inspectors received a letter signed by a group of sixth form students. The contents of the letter were investigated thoroughly, including through additional interviews with groups of sixth form students and school leaders and scrutiny of pertinent documentation. The findings of these investigations are reported in the relevant sections of the report.

## Inspection team

Daniel Burton, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

Ralph Brompton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Silverstone UTC opened in September 2013. It is sponsored jointly by Silverstone Circuits, Tresham College and the University of Northampton.
- The UTC admits students in Years 10 and 12 and draws students from a wide catchment area covering central and south Northamptonshire, north Buckinghamshire and surrounding areas. As a result, students join the UTC from a very wide range of schools.
- The UTC is smaller than other secondary schools but similar in size to other UTCs. Most students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. Virtually all students speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of girls at the UTC is very low, currently around 15% overall.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium varies between year groups but is below average overall. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- As currently there are no published examination results for Year 11, it is not possible to report whether the UTC meets the government's floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The curriculum aims to equip students to meet the economic needs of the region and is sharply focused on science and engineering. The large majority of students pursue courses relating to high performance engineering. A minority of students follow a business and technical events management curriculum. At Key Stage 4, all students study English, mathematics, science and geography and are taught physical education. The UTC curriculum follows the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. The 14-19 curriculum includes a combination of academic and vocational qualifications linked to the UTC's specialisms.
- The UTC does not use any alternative providers but works with a wide range of employers from the high performance engineering and business and technical events management sectors.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be outstanding and never less than consistently good, by:
  - making sure all learning takes place at a suitably demanding pace
  - making sure that students' discussions in lessons are always focused on the work
  - ensuring all marking helps students to improve their work.
- Continue to monitor rigorously the quality of teaching and students' achievement in business and technical events management courses to ensure that the recent and significant improvements to teaching are sustained.
- Ensure induction procedures and the curriculum fully prepares all groups of students to make the most of the time the UTC dedicates to personal study.
- Improve lines of communication with parents so that all parents are fully informed about how well their children are achieving and about the UTC's work overall.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- In a short space of time, the Principal and his team have established a culture in which students are expected to work hard, behave well and respect each other and their teachers. These high expectations are helping students to become articulate, confident and well-qualified individuals.
- Leadership benefits strongly from the Principal's sector-specific background and expertise. As former chief engineer of a prestigious motor sports company, he has an acute understanding of the needs of the local economy and, with his team, is ensuring that students are equipped to meet these needs well.
- The Principal is very well supported by two very experienced deputies who have worked as senior leaders in other schools. As a result, the senior leadership team combines business acumen and sector-specific expertise with a strong understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching, high achievement and first-rate pastoral care.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and have identified precisely where improvements need to be made. They have worked tirelessly and relentlessly to overcome some of the problems which emerged in the UTC's first year, for example, the poor quality of assessment on the business and technical events management course. They recognise, however, that these weaknesses should have been identified and addressed earlier.
- Professional development for staff is informed sharply by findings from observations of teaching and is closely matched to the UTC's improvement priorities. Almost all staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire are highly positive about the quality of leadership at the UTC.
- The UTC's evaluation of its own work is accurate and closely informs improvement planning. The academy's development plan is detailed and includes clear success criteria. Some of the plans which derive from the whole-school improvement plan, however, lack sufficient detail. For example, it is not clear how and when the effectiveness of the UTC's literacy policy will be checked.
- Senior leaders are ensuring that the growing team of middle leaders receive the necessary training to fulfil their roles effectively. A rolling programme of professional development is in place, including through the National Professional Qualification in Middle Leadership. Occasionally, lesson observations undertaken by middle leaders do not focus enough on students' achievement over time.
- Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity well. Effective leadership is ensuring that disadvantaged students are doing at least as well as their peers at the UTC and, in some cases, better than them. The proportion of girls joining the UTC is growing and there are tentative increases in the proportion of girls studying engineering-related courses.
- Leadership ensures that discrimination is not tolerated and the UTC provides excellent support for students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable to discrimination.
- The curriculum has a strong focus on courses relating to the UTC's two specialism of high performance engineering and business and technical events management. As such, it is well matched to the needs of the local economy and the aspirations of most students. The curriculum is enhanced through strong links with local employers. Leaders and managers keep the curriculum under constant review and have made changes since the UTC opened to ensure that the needs of lower attaining students are better met. Strategies to build students' skills in working independently when they join the UTC are under-developed. As a result, not all students make the most of the personal preparation time they are given at the end of each day.
- The UTC benefits from good support from its sponsors. Silverstone Circuits donated the land on which the UTC was built and all three sponsors have played an important role in shaping the curriculum. Support from the University of Northampton, for example, has enabled students to take part in projects more typically aimed at undergraduate students.

- The UTC's work to promote students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education is good. Leaders and managers ensure that students receive appropriate religious education and develop wider skills and understanding through the well-planned 'theme of the fortnight' programme. This programme provides good opportunities for students to engage with ethical and topical issues as well as topics relating to business and the world of work. As a result of these, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students' spiritual and moral development are also enhanced by visits to the school from outside speakers, including leaders from different faith communities. Students raise considerable amounts of money for different charitable causes, including through events they organise themselves. There are currently only limited opportunities for students to engage in artistic and cultural pursuits beyond their studies.
- Students receive good quality careers advice. All students currently in Year 13 have secured conditional offers for university, places at college, apprenticeships or employment. Guidance into Year 12 has improved to ensure that students who join the UTC now have a much stronger understanding of the curriculum and the UTC's specialisms than students did when the UTC first opened.
- The UTC works extremely closely and effectively with the parents of students who experience difficulties from time to time, including students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. However, strategies to engage the wider parental community are less well developed. This is a particular challenge, given the wide geographical area that students are recruited from. Nevertheless, some parents rightly judge that lines and systems of communication need to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors and trustees provide strong and effective support and challenge to the UTC's leaders. They keep a close check on the school's safeguarding arrangements and ensure these arrangements meet statutory requirements. Governors discuss safeguarding and students' health and safety at the start of every meeting.
  - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They verify the information they are given by senior leaders by conducting their own regular visits to the UTC and by contracting external consultants, including serving headteachers, to make checks on the quality of teaching.
  - They have a good understanding of achievement data and use these to provide good support and challenge to school leaders. Governors ensure that the additional funding received through the pupil premium is spent effectively. They know, for example, that initiatives to support disadvantaged students in Year 11 have been effective and are resulting in these students achieving well both in English and mathematics.
  - Governors have ensured robust systems are in place to manage the performance of staff, including the Principal, whose targets are sharply linked to students' achievement. Teachers' progression through the pay scales is very closely monitored and informed by the highest expectations. For example, teachers are required to demonstrate two consecutive years of good performance by their students before moving to the next pay scale. This is an unusually exacting standard. Robust action is taken to tackle underperformance.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students conduct themselves very sensibly around the UTC and welcome visitors confidently and courteously. Students' good personal development makes a significant contribution to their progress in lessons and over time.
- Students wear their business dress smartly and with pride. They develop good business-like characteristics, such as shaking hands with visitors to the school. They use their laptops and, where appropriate, their mobile phones in lessons without fuss.
- Students respect the UTC premises which, as a result, remain in pristine condition. Employers who work with students from the UTC are unstinting in their praise of students' attitudes.

- Occasionally, students' concentration dips when lessons (which are much longer than is usually seen in other secondary schools) are not delivered at a suitable pace.
- The large majority of students make good use of curriculum time allocated for personal study. However, a few students find it harder to concentrate, in part because they have not been trained well enough in how to make the best of this time.
- Students' attendance is in line with the average for other secondary schools and the proportion of students who are persistently absent is low.
- Three students were permanently excluded this year which is more than should be expected. This was a result of the UTC's refusal to tolerate behaviour which could threaten the safety of other students.
- The UTC has helped transform the behaviour of some students who joined the UTC having behaved poorly at other stages of their education. Some of the students who spoke with inspectors described how their attitudes to school, their aspirations and self-esteem had been transformed in their time at the UTC.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pastoral care is a real strength of the UTC and senior leaders use their considerable expertise to ensure that vulnerable children are protected from harm.
- Students report that occasional incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. This was confirmed in inspectors' discussions with individual students who have received support from staff and prefects.
- Appropriate risk assessments are in place to keep students safe when dealing with potentially hazardous equipment and these are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective.
- Students are well informed about how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They support each other well and are tolerant of others' differences, including with regard to sexual orientation.
- Discussions with groups of girls, disabled students and with special educational needs and other students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable confirmed that all groups of students feel safe.
- School records show there have been occasional incidents of name-calling, wrongly described as 'banter' by students, linked to race. Amendments to the curriculum have resulted in these incidents becoming rare.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The great majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Very effective learning was observed in almost all curriculum areas and students' work indicates particularly strong learning over time in English, mathematics, engineering, chemistry and physics. Teaching in the business and technical events management courses has improved significantly and is ensuring that students who have previously underachieved on these courses are on track to meet or exceed their challenging targets.
- Teachers typically make good use of assessment information to plan work which meets the needs of different groups of students and to check how well students are doing. For example, in mathematics, very regular testing, using past examination papers, ensures teachers and students know precisely which areas of mathematics students need to work on to improve their grades. This has a very positive impact on students' achievement.
- Teaching in English benefits from teachers' strong understanding of examination assessment criteria which they skilfully pass on to students.

- Teaching in engineering courses ensures students develop good technical knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers use their good subject knowledge – and accredited technical expertise – to plan learning which equips students well for engineering-related careers. For example, in one lesson seen, students demonstrated care and accuracy in using dial-test indicators, micrometres and Vernier gauges to measure and evaluate the parallelism and rotational accuracy of chucks and work-holding devices.
- Outstanding teaching in chemistry is underpinned by very high quality written feedback, challenging questioning and lessons which provide a good blend of independent study and collaborative working and of academic and practical work.
- Mostly, teachers implement the school's literacy policy well, with good focus on spellings and subject-specific vocabulary. Sometimes, they do not insist enough on high standards of written presentation.
- Where learning is less strong, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what students' can achieve in the time provided. While relationships are almost always very strong, sometimes this can lead to an overly-relaxed atmosphere with students chatting rather than working.
- Some high quality marking was seen, for example, in the business and technical events management courses, mathematics and science. However, this is not seen consistently in all classes.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- The UTC opened in September 2013. As a result, there are no published data on students' progress and attainment at the end of each key stage. The academy's own achievement data are reliable and accurate. Data match the quality of work seen in all year groups.
- Data show that students are making excellent progress in English and mathematics. Comparison with national data published in 2014 shows that students are making much faster progress than expected. This includes students entering the UTC at all levels of prior attainment. Students who have previously underachieved and the most able students are doing particularly well.
- Because there are not yet any published end of key stage data, it is not possible to compare the attainment of disadvantaged students with others in the school or with those nationally. However, these students are currently making excellent progress in English and mathematics and in many cases are making even more progress than their peers at the UTC.
- The most able students make particularly good progress. They respond well to the UTC's challenging technical and academic curriculum and thrive in the UTC's business-like environment.
- Less able students are also doing well, though some take time to adapt to the demands of the UTC, particularly with regard to working independently. As a result, while their progress by the time they reach Year 11 is strong, progress for this group in Year 10 is slower.
- The small proportion of girls at the UTC make similar progress to the boys.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. The UTC's small size means that they are known very well to staff. Senior leaders monitor their well-being and achievement extremely thoroughly and liaise closely with their parents to help remove any barriers to learning.
- A small proportion of students were entered early for GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10 last year. This enabled the middle ability students entered to secure their target grade early and provided valuable examination practice for students who are less confident in mathematics. Early entry has had a positive impact on students' achievement.

- The 2014 AS results were disappointing. Too many students entered for AS mathematics and physics failed their examinations. This was because not all students were guided onto the right courses when the UTC opened. Entrance requirements have been tightened and school data indicate that current Year 12 students are achieving well on these courses. This was confirmed during the inspection by observations of teaching in Year 12 mathematics and physics, scrutiny of students' work and discussions with students in lessons and in private study time. The UTC has ensured that students who underachieved on these courses last year have been supported onto courses that better match their needs and ability or into apprenticeships with local employers.
- Students develop very strong employability skills through regular opportunities to engage in team work and problem solving, including through projects devised by local employers such as McLaren Formula One and Aston Martin. Students on the business and technical events management courses develop good work-related skills, for example, through planning and delivering public functions and events.

### **The sixth form provision** is good

- The sixth form is well led. The highly respected head of sixth form knows the students well and ensures they receive strong academic and pastoral support. Good quality information, advice and guidance prepares students well for the next stage of their education and training, or employment. Leaders and managers know that they did not identify or remedy quickly enough some of the initial problems in the sixth form when the UTC opened but have put in place strong procedures which have ensured that these have not been repeated.
- Sixth form students are exceptionally mature, driven and articulate. Their conduct and behaviour are good and at times exemplary and their attendance is excellent.
- Teaching in the sixth form is typically good and some, for example, in chemistry, is outstanding.
- Teaching in mathematics and physics is good and ensures that students are achieving well on these courses. Year 12 students who met informally with inspectors spoke extremely positively about the quality of mathematics and physics teaching. AS physics students particularly appreciate the extra lessons they receive in mathematics to support their learning in some of the more challenging aspects of their physics course. Year 13 mathematics and physics students are also doing well, though some of the Year 13 physicists did less well in a recent mock examination paper because the absence of temporary staff meant that students were not fully briefed about the requirements of the test.
- Almost all students who join the sixth form without previously having attained a grade C in GCSE English or mathematics do so while in the sixth form.
- Students are achieving well on the courses relating to high performance engineering. They benefit from excellent opportunities to work with prestigious employers, including Mercedes Benz and Caterham Formula One. Students following business and technical events management courses benefit from opportunities to draw on technical expertise from within the sector. For example, their risk assessments for the public events they organise are subject to exacting scrutiny from the Head of Health and Safety at Silverstone Circuits.
- Inaccurate teacher assessment on the business and technical events management course last year has understandably led to some resentment from students who have had to repeat work, especially the small group of business events students in Year 13. Inspectors investigated this aspect of the UTC's work very thoroughly, speaking to all students (present during the inspection) on the Year 13 course and a sample of half of those on the Year 12 course, observing teaching, looking at students' work and scrutinising the very latest moderation reports from representatives from the awarding body.
- Teaching in business and technical events management is now strong. A very experienced teacher has recently taken up post and is ensuring all students are on track to meet or exceed their target grades. The latest reports from the course's awarding body confirm that assessment is now accurate and that



students' work is of high quality.

- A small number of students who join the academy in Year 12 choose not to complete their courses. This is for a range of reasons, including the long distance between their homes and the UTC or because they decide that they are not ready to specialise in the curriculum areas on offer. Leaders ensure that all students who choose to leave the UTC early are supported into apprenticeships or alternative courses elsewhere.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139690
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450148

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	University Technical College
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	351
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	126
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Governing Body
<b>Chair</b>	Doug Newman
<b>Principal</b>	Neil Patterson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01327 855010
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