

Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC

Potter Street, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1QG

Inspection dates

21–22 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Challenges to the school's development were not overcome quickly enough after the school opened in September 2014. Consequently, pupils have not received a good standard of education.
- Parents and pupils have been disappointed because the school has not met their expectations. Only recently have new leaders begun to bring about improvements in the school. It is too early to see the full effects of leaders' work.
- Attendance is low. Recently introduced systems and procedures to manage attendance are slowly improving the situation. Leaders recognise that persistent absence is still too high.
- There is variability in how teachers respond to latecomers to lessons and follow up missed work. Some pupils' attitudes to being at school remain poor.
- Enrichment activities and links with industry have not resulted in pupils receiving regular opportunities to develop their wider employability skills. As a result, some pupils are insufficiently prepared for life after school.
- The school's policy for supporting pupils' literacy is being developed. Currently, spelling and punctuation mistakes in pupils' work are too often missed in subjects other than English.
- Progress in English and languages was significantly lower than average in 2016. While improving as a result of staff changes, there remains variation in the performance of subjects.
- Progress on 16 to 19 study programmes was broadly average last year. However, attainment was weak, particularly on academic courses. Students' personal development is not well enough supported by the current provision of enrichment and work-related learning opportunities.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher took prompt and effective action to review the school's performance and implement swift changes so that standards could start to improve. Behaviour improved particularly quickly.
- Overall, the progress made at GCSE last year was good. Pupils made very good progress in mathematics and science.
- Leaders have recruited experienced teachers to improve standards in teaching and learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by:
 - ensuring that strategies for improving pupils' attendance are followed rigorously by all staff
 - improving the attitudes of pupils with historically low attendance.
- Improve outcomes by:
 - reducing variability in teaching, learning and assessment between subjects so that pupils make at least good progress across all subjects and key stages
 - ensuring that work-related learning opportunities and enrichment activities are a routine part of the curriculum and contribute highly effectively to pupils' personal development and destinations
 - developing a whole-school strategy for the teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Further develop leaders' skills, particularly those new to their roles, so that their work drives and sustains improvements in pupils' performance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The interim headteacher has been in post since January 2016 while the school leadership team has been in place since September 2016. Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and supported further by external scrutiny from the Baker Dearing Trust and the Department for Education. The actions now being taken by leaders are improving this school.
- Leaders' work has not yet improved the quality of teaching and assessment to a consistently good standard to secure good outcomes across subjects and year groups.
- Some parents and pupils reported to inspectors that they feel let down by promises made by this university technical college (UTC) not being fulfilled. A legacy of challenges, including in staff recruitment and financial constraints, has been a significant challenge to overcome.
- Faculty and pastoral leaders are also members of the school's senior leadership team. They recognise that their work has not yet had the full intended impact, partly as a result of strategies being recently introduced and because they are developing the skills to further improve their effectiveness. Leaders are very capable and have demonstrated the capacity for quick improvements already.
- The curriculum is designed to allow pupils to gain qualifications that will support them into engineering and aviation-related careers. Languages were offered until this year. Leaders accept that this means that the taught curriculum is narrower than they anticipated and have plans to broaden it appropriately. The vast majority of pupils study engineering and only a few students in the sixth form follow A-level study programmes.
- Enrichment activities, including links with commercial and industrial partners, have not been consistently effective in securing pupils' personal development and preparation for life after school. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils receive regular, high-quality opportunities to develop the skills demanded by employers in pupils' aspirational careers.
- Leaders ensured that the pupil premium (additional government funding to support the progress of disadvantaged children and children looked after) supported disadvantaged pupils' good progress last year overall. The strategies in place this year are less well developed and depend too heavily upon pre-existing whole-school arrangements. Leaders admit that further work is needed to refine ongoing additional support for disadvantaged pupils.
- From September 2016, a new system of teacher professional development and performance management has been in place. Teachers reported to inspectors that they highly value the opportunity to share 'what works' on a Friday morning, for example. However, teaching is not consistently good or better across subjects.
- Recruitment of better teachers is helping to improve the standard of teaching that pupils receive. Pupils told inspectors that they have been frustrated by the turnover of staff in the past because this limited their personal development and learning.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support that is managed by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). This support is closely planned around pupils' needs, but the effect of this work is limited because too much reliance is placed upon teachers adhering to the agreed support plans. This results in variability in how well pupils learn.

Governance of the school

- Governors did not hold leaders effectively to account for the standard of education from the moment the school opened. They did not challenge leaders precisely in order to establish the exact nature of the weaknesses that were emerging during the first year.
- Governors recognise the deficiencies in the school's governance in the past and commissioned an external review of governance last year. They also liaise closely with the Baker Dearing Trust, which has provided effective support to the governing body. Consequently, governors now have a secure understanding of where improvements in their work are needed. Recruitment of new governors and further training are allowing governors to now hold leaders more firmly to account so that they bring about the required school improvements.
- Governors share leaders' high expectations for pupils' development. They are ambitious for the school and their commitment to the school's development is unquestionable. They firmly believe in the ethos and aims of this school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher is unequivocal about placing pupils' welfare before all other priorities and has taken effective action to refine the school's arrangements since joining. Staff receive appropriate training about risks, including radicalisation, and in the 'Prevent' duty. They understand whom to go to with concerns and take their responsibility seriously. Pupils learn about e-safety, drugs and other potential local dangers through the tutorial and assembly programme. Governors have received safeguarding training, including on topics such as extremism, and regularly check up on any ongoing matter regarding pupils' welfare.
- The school's policies for safeguarding pupils' welfare reflect the latest statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016) and leaders ensure that appropriate referrals to external agencies are prompt and followed up. Leaders have a firm understanding of pupils' needs and the challenges some face outside school. All necessary pre-employment checks are made on staff and recorded on the school's single central register.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The school's assessment procedures have been in place since the start of the academic year. They have not yet led to consistency in how teachers assess and monitor pupils' work. As a result, pupils are not always aware of how to improve on their prior learning.

- There is no whole-school policy for how pupils should receive feedback on their performance. As a result, there is variability in how well pupils understand the progress they are making.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently meet pupils' needs. Leaders recognise that the most able pupils are not consistently well challenged because some teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve are not high enough. Where teachers do plan closely for pupils' needs, then their progress is correspondingly better.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported by teachers who use information supplied by the SENCo to plan tasks that are appropriate to pupils' abilities. However, this is not done consistently well and some pupils make much slower progress. The SENCo does not currently routinely monitor teaching and learning to ensure that the needs are met of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There is not a whole-school policy for how pupils' literacy skills are supported and monitored. Some subjects do focus sharply upon improving pupils' articulation of their learning, but others do not do this effectively.
- Teachers' questioning skills vary. Some teachers probe preconceptions and challenge pupils to develop their thinking well. Others are too accepting of poor responses and do not follow up on misunderstandings promptly.
- The whole-school assessment system is now providing subject leaders and governors with more useful information, which they use to monitor pupils' performance. The system also allows parents to receive more accurate information about the performance of their child.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Opportunities for pupils to develop the skills that will help them access the careers and ambitions they aim for are underdeveloped. Pupils' skills development has also been hampered by the significant staff turnover since the school opened.
- Trips, external speakers and careers events are part of the curriculum but there is not a strategically planned programme to check and monitor the effectiveness of these activities upon pupils' personal development. Links with the school's partners have not all provided the support and opportunities that parents and pupils expected.
- Brunel University and the Royal Air Force (RAF) are notable exceptions and have provided more relevant and useful opportunities for pupils to develop their engineering skills. For example, the Combined Cadet Force is a significant part of the school's current enrichment offer. The Royal Aeronautical Society has also provided opportunities for pupils to put their engineering skills to practical use.

- Pupils' self-confidence is a strength. Pupils' discussions with one another, staff and inspectors during the inspection demonstrated self-awareness, tolerance and respect. Some aspects of pupils' understanding of keeping themselves safe require improvement so that all are able to articulate the potential risks they may face in the future. The pastoral curriculum is aimed at tackling this well.
- The school is a safe, well-maintained and welcoming environment. Pupils treat the school with respect, a notable development since the arrival of the interim headteacher and senior staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because attendance remains low overall and persistent absence is high for some. Leaders' actions are slowly improving this situation and improving the capacity of the school's systems to support the improvements.
- External support from Bishop Ramsey School is helping to develop form tutors' skills. This partnership is also supporting leaders' strategies to improve attendance.
- The school's intake is diverse and a significant proportion of pupils come to this school after they had struggled at their previous provision. As a result, some struggle to improve their attitudes to being at school, which hinders the school's work to improve attendance.
- Some teachers do not uphold leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, some pupils who arrive late to lessons are not challenged and expected sanctions are not applied. Pupils still need reminding about some rules such as those on mobile phone use and listening to music around the site.
- Since the interim headteacher arrived, the number of exclusions has fallen significantly, as has the need for internal isolation of pupils. Pupils also told inspectors that behaviour has significantly improved because processes are clear and expectations high.
- Bullying is rare and pupils consider the school's diversity to be a strength. They view racist and homophobic insults as a significant 'red line' and told inspectors that they like the fact that this small school allows for a high degree of social and cultural mixing. Pupils told inspectors that they would not accept poor behaviour, including bullying.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Last year, pupils made poor progress in English. The number of pupils achieving grades A*–C in English and mathematics at GCSE was slightly lower than average. Current assessment information and pupils' work indicate an improving picture in English as a result of new, more effective leadership and teaching within the department.

- The careers advice and guidance provided to pupils last year enabled most pupils to move on to further education and employment. However, only a minority of pupils stayed on into the school's own sixth form last year, with the majority moving to other further education providers. Some moved into apprenticeships, while others did not move on to sustained education or employment.
- Pupils underperformed in languages last year. Languages are no longer offered in the curriculum and those who started a language in Year 10 last year are being provided with tuition to complete their course now. Year 10 pupils who chose to study Spanish are now studying geography and were provided with good catch-up sessions so that they are now making progress in line with that of those who chose geography to begin with.
- Current assessment information indicates that pupils' performance reflects that of last year's cohort overall, with some improvement in English language as well. There remains variability between subjects, including in engineering, which most pupils study.
- Current plans for careers advice and guidance, linking to wider opportunities for employer engagement and personal development, are beginning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of key skills outside the classroom.
- Overall progress at GCSE was good last year, with pupils performing significantly better than average in mathematics and science in particular. Pupils also performed well in engineering vocational courses.
- Disadvantaged pupils made good progress at GCSE last year and outperformed their peers nationally. Current assessment information indicates that groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are doing as well as their peers across subjects.
- The most able performed well overall last year, but the most able disadvantaged pupils did not. Currently, these pupils' progress is variable.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Last year's 16 to 19 study programme outcomes were broadly in line with the national average for progress, but attainment was low. Progress in vocational courses was also broadly average, but weaker than in the academic subjects.
- Last year, half of Year 12 continued their courses into Year 13. Of those who did not continue, half are re-starting their level 3 courses. Some studied level 2 courses last year and so are now moving on to A-level and equivalent vocational courses either at Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC or another further education provider.
- Few students study A-level only study programmes. Those who do tend to do well in their qualifications go on to study at university after school. However, the opportunities for personal development are less well organised than they are for those studying engineering courses.

- Students studying BTEC vocational engineering courses at level 2 and level 3 develop good skills linked to industrial standards. Last year's outcomes in engineering were weaker than they should have been because of poor-quality teaching and learning. Significant changes made by the interim headteacher have improved standards in vocational engineering courses.
- Attendance in the sixth form is improving and is better than last year. However, a legacy of weaker attendance means that improvements are more apparent in Year 12 than Year 13.
- Careers advice and guidance are provided to students, helping them onto courses that are appropriate given their prior learning. However, links to industry and commercial partners, and a routine programme of personal development, are underdeveloped, so fewer students than intended move on to engineering-related careers. Work experience is offered but has limited impact because some students do work experience that is not related to their career goals.
- Last year, most students who completed their study programmes went on to pursue apprenticeships. Those who applied to university gained places on appropriate courses but too many did not obtain sustained education or employment.
- Students who need to re-sit GCSE English or mathematics receive good support to help them gain a grade A*–C. There is an improving trend of those attaining at least a grade C in both subjects. Some pupils study level 2 vocational engineering alongside re-taking mathematics or English. This prepares them well for subsequent education, training or employment at a higher level.
- Behaviour is a particular strength in the sixth form. Students engage maturely with one another and set the right example for younger pupils. In lessons, students are keen and willing to learn. Students are able to make links between their courses and desired career aspirations because they are engaged with their chosen courses.

School details

Unique reference number	140941
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10023570

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

Type of school	Secondary technical
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	205
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Professor Geoffrey Rodgers
Headteacher	Barry Hersom
Telephone number	01923 602130
Website	www.heathrow-utc.org
Email address	info@heathrow-utc.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This UTC specialises in aviation engineering. The UTC's principal partners are Brunel University, the RAF, Heathrow Airport, the Royal Aeronautical Society and British Airways.

- Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC opened in September 2014. The interim headteacher was appointed from January 2016.
- The school receives external support from the Baker Dearing Trust and Bishop Ramsey School.
- The school uses Ealing Alternative Provision.
- This school is far smaller than the average school where the majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A far smaller proportion of girls are at the UTC compared with the national average.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities but a smaller than average proportion have education, health and care plans.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools' performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons, tutorial sessions and an assembly. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and discussed pupils' learning with them.
- Inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils to discuss school developments and the impact of the school's work on pupils' development.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 20 staff, 12 parents and 14 pupils who responded to Ofsted surveys.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation including: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for development; policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, attendance and behaviour; the school's single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff; assessment and behaviour information; external reviews of governance; and external reviews of the school's performance.

Inspection team

Matt Tiplin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Vicky Linsley	Ofsted Inspector

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