

Elutec

Yew Tree Avenue, Rainham Road South, Dagenham East, Essex RM10 7FN

Inspection dates

29–30 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders, governors and sponsors did not effectively manage the launch of the new school. Inappropriate premises and poor staff appointments meant that teaching in the first two years of opening severely hindered pupils' progress, particularly in engineering.
- Many pupils, including students in the sixth form, did not achieve as they should have done in 2016.
- Leaders know that they need to do more to address the initial shortcomings in teaching, learning and the progress pupils make. However, their strategic actions are not securing rapid improvement. Current pupils are not making enough progress.
- Too many pupils attend school sporadically. Some pupils do not behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Teachers do not routinely provide challenging activities that engage and motivate pupils. Pupils often find the work easy and tedious and consequently, they make inadequate progress.
- Leaders do not routinely check that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who are disadvantaged, make enough progress from their starting points.
- Initiatives to improve pupils' literacy are not effective. This hinders many from accessing and excelling in subjects across the curriculum.
- Many pupils and students believe that the school misrepresented itself to the applicants. They say that they were made promises that were far from the reality. Retention and recruitment of students are a concern.
- Governors do not hold school leaders to account enough for the impact of their actions.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils want to achieve, and mix well together. Most made a conscious choice to join the school and have clear aspirations of careers in engineering.
- Governors and leaders have an aspirational vision for the school's future and have a clear vision of what they hope to achieve.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- The school's 16 to 19 study programmes ensure that students have regular opportunities to engage with the sponsor employers and University College London. Work experience is plentiful and leads to apprenticeship offers.
- The school is now in state-of-the-art facilities and there have been some changes in staffing. These are beginning to have an impact.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - formulating urgently an effective strategic plan to improve the school
 - senior leaders holding staff more clearly to account for the progress and learning of pupils, and students in the sixth form
 - ensuring that leaders and governors can show the impact of funded initiatives on the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve teaching and assessment and its impact on pupils' and students' learning and achievement by:
 - teachers having consistently good subject knowledge and appropriate training provided when this is not the case
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are well trained, are deployed appropriately and work effectively with teachers to support pupils' learning, especially those who have complex needs
 - middle leaders checking regularly and consistently that teaching is of good quality
 - improving the teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum
 - supporting all staff to promote a consistently calm learning atmosphere, where pupils are encouraged to be more actively engaged in their own learning
 - staff making full use of the specialist teaching facilities so that pupils, and students in the sixth form, have regular opportunities to hone their practical skills.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by:
 - supporting all staff to promote an environment where pupils take responsibility for their own good conduct
 - improving the attendance and punctuality of identified pupils
 - reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions
 - ensuring the curriculum and structure of the school day engage and motivate pupils
 - promoting the school in a way that encourages pupils to attend and stay on to courses in the sixth form, while being clear about what is required for success on these courses.

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

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders, governors and the sponsors, while passionate about the inception of the new school, mismanaged the initial launch. Initially promoting the school using a sponsor's facilities, in reality, pupils found themselves housed in poorly conceived, temporary accommodation. This, coupled with poor appointments in key areas, meant that teaching and learning in the first two years of opening significantly hindered pupils' progress. This was particularly the case in engineering.
- In 2016, many pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. Some are now in the sixth form and are trying to make up for their poor performance at GCSE. Leaders know that they need to do much to address the issues surrounding the quality of teaching and its impact. However, their strategic actions are not securing rapid enough improvement. Current pupils are beginning to make better progress, but not enough from their starting points.
- Reading is not promoted effectively across the curriculum. The leader in charge of this area has not received appropriate support, guidance or training from senior leaders. Resources are few; there is no library, and available books in classrooms are a random selection. Staff do not routinely provide helpful support, advice and guidance about pupils' reading. While leaders acknowledge that pupils enjoy non-fiction and periodicals, few of these resources are available.
- Leadership of provision for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not strong. Interventions focus on pupils' attitudes to learning rather than improving their access to their studies. Staff are not fully aware of how they can meet some pupils' complex needs. While heads of department monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities within subjects, senior leaders do not check that additional funding for this group is ensuring that they make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupil premium funding does not ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, receive enough support. Leaders do not regularly analyse that the money they have spent is having a positive impact on the progress disadvantaged pupils make. In 2016, these pupils made far less progress than their peers and pupils nationally. Insufficient attention is given to identifying pupils' specific needs and putting in place appropriate strategies to meet these.
- Middle leaders in some areas are strong and they know what they want to achieve. They carefully check the quality of teaching and learning and know what needs to be done to secure better outcomes for pupils. However, they face challenges in staffing expertise, which is having a detrimental effect on pupils' progress.
- Performance management arrangements have improved this year. The system is simpler and teachers' targets are now linked to pupils' outcomes. This enables middle and senior leaders to discuss with staff the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. It is still in the early days of implementation.
- Leaders have developed a science, technology, engineering and mathematics

curriculum. Many pupils and students in the sixth form have been attracted to this focused curriculum and the facilities the new building offers. Equally, links with the sponsors enable pupils to undertake meaningful and regular work placements and receive valuable mentoring from industry professionals. These experiences give them an insight into working in modern Britain and contributing to British society as active citizens.

- Pupils are focused and career driven. This specialised curriculum appeals to pupils wishing to pursue a career in engineering. However, many are disappointed by the lack of practical opportunities to develop their skills, particularly in engineering.
- Leaders have established strong links with a local secondary school. This has generated good opportunities for staff to share best practice and ensure that their assessments of pupils' work are standardised. Leaders have invested heavily in recruiting consultants to work with particular departments. This has raised staff confidence in some areas.
- Of those parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, some believe that more could be done to improve communication between school and home. Almost half of these parents disagreed that the school was well led and managed.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable about performance information. However, they do not routinely challenge school leaders about the impact of initiatives. For example, they have not ensured that additional funding is used effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors do not ensure that school leaders provide enough strategic direction from the top.
- Governors are aware of the current financial deficit and the need for a recovery plan. Governors are exploring different options for a viable solution to the recruitment and retention issues that would alleviate financial difficulties. They are looking to expand their expertise still further by appointing a governor with recent secondary leadership experience.
- Governors are highly professional, experienced, and passionate about the school they wish to create and clear about their vision for future achievements. They offer invaluable employment opportunities to pupils and students, through mentoring programmes, work experience and links with related industries. They recently commissioned an external review, which helped them to evaluate their practice and identify areas that needed improving. Governors have been quick to start completing identified actions.
- Governors are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. Most have done safeguarding training, including training on the 'Prevent' duty and the statutory guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016). Some governors have also completed safer recruitment training. They ensure that school leaders meet all statutory requirements around safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are comprehensive and in line with statutory guidance. Leaders understand the complex problems of some pupils and carefully monitor their emotional and social needs. Pupil referrals to external agencies are recorded appropriately and followed up to ensure that relevant action is swiftly taken. All staff are vigilant and clear about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They are well trained and clear about what to do if they believe a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff are clear about the potential risks in the local community, including gang membership, child sexual exploitation and right-wing extremism. The site is purpose-built, safe and secure. Leaders prioritise ensuring that workshops are appropriately safe.
- Many parents who responded to Parent View believe that their child is safe at school, though fewer believe that the school deals effectively with bullying.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers often have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that lacks challenge and fails to engage pupils' interest. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to reflect and use their prior skills and knowledge to solve problems and become inquisitive and curious learners. Instead, they undertake short, mundane activities, which fail to ignite their interest. Consequently, in some areas, pupils are not engaged in their learning.
- Some teachers give little scope to pupils to experiment, think deeply and hypothesise. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to independently investigate, discover and demonstrate reasoning skills. Questioning does not allow pupils to think and use their prior subject knowledge to give detailed answers. This particularly hinders the most able pupils from achieving the highest grades.
- While the school has state-of-the art facilities and workshops, pupils complained that they have too few opportunities to undertake practical project work, as promised when they joined the school. Instead, they indicate that they spend lengthy periods undertaking written coursework assignments or completing standalone activities.
- For some pupils, the limited development of their literacy skills hinders their ability to access the curriculum or produce written assignments to a high enough quality. Some find it difficult to produce effective study notes to aid their final revision for examinations. Pupils know their target grades; however, few could explain what they needed to do to achieve them.
- Information on pupils' prior knowledge is available. However, some teachers do not use this information to support individuals, particularly those who need additional support in order to access the work. Teachers plan the structure of the lesson in detail, but they do not take into consideration the academic needs of individual pupils. Consequently, often, all pupils undertake the same tasks and this gives limited opportunities for learning or appropriate challenge for pupils with different starting points.
- Leaders have introduced a variety of ways to track pupils' progress; however, these are not consistent across the school. As a result, some pupils are not clear about whether

or not they are making enough progress in individual subject areas.

- The sponsors provide a range of meaningful opportunities for pupils to explore links with industrial partners and employment opportunities. Pupils undertake relevant and appropriate work-experience placements. They benefit from mentors and tutors who offer bespoke support. Some of the sponsors, for instance Ford, provide mentors who teach relevant sections of the pupils' engineering course. Pupils find these opportunities highly beneficial.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of activities across the curriculum. However, it is not having enough impact on pupils' personal development and welfare. For example, too many pupils behave inappropriately around the school site or do not show respect towards their peers.
- School leaders are reviewing the structure and organisation of the school day and week. Currently, pupils attend until 5pm so that they can emulate a 'working day'. However, this is proving ineffective for some pupils, who find it difficult to stay motivated for the whole day. Leaders are giving further thought to the mix of practical and text-based activities.
- Pupils receive helpful advice on how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider community. A weekly visit by the safer schools officer provides guidance on avoiding extremism and the dangers of gang affiliation and issues such as sexting.
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities that include sport. During the inspection, pupils talked with enthusiasm of their interest in the 'cycle workshop' where they mend and recycle mountain bikes donated by the police. Most pupils study German, with some achieving a GCSE in the subject. Pupils are about to embark on a trip to Germany to experience life there first-hand.
- Leaders are conscious that the school currently attracts few girls. They work hard to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics among their female population and recently ran a conference in which five women came in to talk about their careers and successes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance is still too low for some groups of pupils. School leaders are addressing this issue; however, their actions are not having enough impact. Too many pupils still attend sporadically, which is hindering the progress they make.
- In classes where teachers have low expectations and activities are pitched at the

wrong level, pupils lack engagement or interest in the task. This results in pupils being bored and unenthusiastic. Some pupils lack the motivation or skills to work on their own. While they still complete tasks, they do so only as a result of staff intervention.

- The conduct of a minority of pupils continues to require improvement. Some pupils arrive with complex needs, gaps in their learning and an aversion to school. Specific actions to support these pupils are sometimes ineffective and consequently, their conduct around the school site is not good. During some recreational times, pupils' behaviour can become boisterous and their language is not always appropriate.
- Pupils are encouraged to explore the reasons for, and issues relating to bullying. They are given helpful advice and guidance on identifying the signs of bullying and how to protect themselves. Mentors build positive relationships with pupils, which encourages a safe environment for pupils to share any concerns. Leaders recognise that more could be done to discourage potentially inflammatory language between pupils. Their zero-tolerance approach to this has resulted in a number of fixed-term exclusions from school.
- Many pupils are keen to do well, having made deliberate choices to study at an engineering college. They are keen to practise skills that will enable them to go on to positions in engineering companies. In lessons where activities are meaningful and interesting, pupils actively engage in their learning.
- The majority of pupils show respect and tolerance towards each other. They mix well across year groups in this diverse learning environment. They are polite and considerate of each other's differences and are courteous to visitors of the school. The inspection team found them to be generally articulate and very keen to voice their opinions.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Many pupils arrive in Year 10 with achievement that is significantly below the national average. Some have gaps in their learning or low levels of literacy. In 2016, many pupils achieved lower than national scores across a range of subjects at the end of Year 11. Equally, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*–C in both English and mathematics at GCSE was half the national figure.
- In 2016, across a number of subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils made significantly less progress than nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils from all starting points made less progress across a range of subjects than pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils on entry made less progress than nationally in 2016 across all subjects.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language made less progress than nationally across a range of subjects in 2016.
- The progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make is lower than that of pupils nationally from similar starting points across a range of subjects. Current pupils are not making good enough progress.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the highest GCSE grades was significantly below

the national average in engineering, English language, English literature, mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics.

- Information provided by school leaders suggests that, while there have been some improvements in the progress made by the current Year 11 pupils, they will still achieve less well than pupils do nationally. Pupils' work seen during the inspection and the variable quality of teaching observed support this evaluation. Pupils expressed concerns over the teaching and support they receive and their ability to achieve desired target grades.
- Senior leaders have not prioritised the need to improve pupils' literacy, so that all pupils can access and excel across the wider curriculum. In September 2016, leaders invested in a phonics reading programme and have undertaken baseline assessments. However, they have not followed this up with progress assessments. Consequently, they cannot show the impact of this initiative. Some pupils lack confidence in their writing. Their written work lacks expression, has limited vocabulary, and is often grammatically inaccurate. This prevents them achieving highly across their subject choices.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- Leadership of 16 to 19 study programmes, as in other areas of the school, lacked direction in the early stages of implementation. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that students become successful learners in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. Consequently, students' progress was poor in 2016.
- Numbers in the sixth form remain low, with very few Year 11 pupils continuing their studies post-16. This is due to pupils not achieving well in GCSE subjects and consequently losing confidence in the quality of teaching and learning on post-16 courses. Equally, retention into Year 13 remains too low. Many of the current Year 11 pupils were clear that they would not be continuing to post-16 courses at Elutec.
- The curriculum is comparatively narrow, focusing on the chosen science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. Many students have chosen level 3 courses for the right reasons. Some students are struggling with re-taking GCSE English and mathematics and not achieving on these courses. Large numbers undertake the extended project qualification when they do not have the interest, aptitude or literacy skills to succeed. Class sizes are small and in some cases not currently financially viable.
- The quality of teaching and support from staff is too inconsistent. As a result, current students are not making the progress of which they are capable. At times, teachers set uninteresting activities that do not motivate or engage students in their learning. Students commented that work sometimes goes missing or is returned late following teachers' assessments. Some students are not confident learners and some do not

show appropriate subject knowledge or relevant literacy skills to succeed. Opportunities to use the facilities are not as frequent as students would like. Students complained that promised project-based learning had not materialised.

- Changes in staffing, particularly in engineering, are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress students make. However, progress for many is still too slow for them to compete in the higher education or work market. The quality of provision in key areas such as science is rightly a concern for senior leaders.
- As in key stage 4, opportunities to work with employers are a strength. The sponsors ensure that a full range of work-experience placements is available. These include placements with Ford, Network Rail, Transport for London and Waites. Students value highly these meaningful opportunities to work in the engineering sector. Students deemed to be behind in their studies do not undertake work experience at the same time as their peers, but catch up on coursework instead. Some affected students resent this. However, school leaders are clear that they make available other opportunities for these students to complete a work-experience placement at a later point.
- Through links with industry mentors and work experience, half of the students successfully achieve apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships. While the school provides information and guidance on applying to university, fewer students successfully do so.
- Positive relationships between students and their tutors ensure that any social, academic or emotional concerns are dealt with quickly. An appropriate range of extra-curricular activities encourages students to participate in activities that stretch them physically and socially.
- The majority of students have clear aspirations for future employment and training. Most made a deliberate choice to leave their previous schools to attend this specialist provision. Many were very vocal about their disappointment in the quality of the provision, with some actively looking for courses elsewhere. Students work hard and show respect and courtesy towards each other and staff.

School details

Unique reference number	140945
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10023572

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

Type of school	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	230
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Cohen
Principal	Ruth Umerah
Telephone number	020 3773 4670
Website	www.elutec.co.uk
Email address	interest@elutec.co.uk
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.
- Elutec is a university technical college. It has four main sponsors: Ford, University College London (UCL), CEME and Prospects College of Advanced Technology (PROCAT).
- Girls represent just over one 10th of the pupil body.

- Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average.
- Almost half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is higher than the national average. The largest groups are those who are Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and any other White background, and 52% are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is slightly above the national average.
- The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is below the national average.
- The school has been in new premises since September 2016.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in 24 parts of lessons, across a range of year groups and subjects. They observed in the workshops and listened to a range of pupils reading.
- Inspectors held discussions with representatives from the governing body, representatives from the sponsors, the principal, vice-principal, senior and middle leaders, and a range of staff, pupils and students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to Parent View, 21 responses to the staff survey, parent surveys conducted by the school and the views of current pupils.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment system.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and policies and procedures, including incident logs.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Nelson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joan McVittie	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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