

South Devon UTC

Kingsteignton Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2QA

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

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

- Last year, key stage 4 pupils attained well below their capabilities on the school's flagship engineering programmes.
- Pupils' progress in English over time has been too slow. Too many pupils' writing skills are not sufficiently developed by the time they finish Year 11.
- Teaching is not providing sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. As a result, they are not developing their skills quickly enough.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' understanding are pinpointing areas of weakness that need to be addressed. However, subsequent teaching is not helping pupils to address the gaps in their understanding effectively.
- Rates of pupils' attendance are too low. Too many pupils miss out on learning because they are not in school regularly.
- Students' progress on academic programmes in the sixth form is below average. It does not match the better progress seen on applied programmes.
- Senior leaders have not secured consistently effective teaching across the school as it has grown in size.
- Middle leaders have not yet ensured sustained good progress for pupils in their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has a clear vision for the school. He is ambitious for all pupils and has the skills necessary to bring about the necessary improvement.
- Senior leaders are innovative and creative. They have successfully built a functioning school with a distinctive curriculum.
- The school provides a nurturing environment where pupils feel secure and well supported.
- Last year, as a result of the school's extensive business links, all students found places in education, employment or training when they left.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievements by:
 - providing the most able pupils in key stage 4 and students in key stage 5 with work that consistently challenges them to extend their understanding
 - developing pupils' writing skills across all subject areas
 - ensuring that teaching addresses pupils' misconceptions when they are identified in assessments
 - consolidating the improvements that have begun this academic year in engineering.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by increasing rates of pupils' attendance.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders further develop their skills through links with other schools and organisations
 - using the monitoring of teaching more effectively to establish consistently high-quality practice across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the school opened in September 2015, there have been a number of staffing changes in key curriculum areas. This has hindered the speed and consistency of its development. Senior leaders' monitoring of teaching, over time, has not been robust and so weaknesses in teaching were not tackled quickly enough. Better systems have recently been established. However, while improving, the quality of teaching is still not consistently good.
- Middle leaders, some of them new to their roles, have not yet overcome the previous deficiencies in their subject areas. Consequently, pupils' progress remains too variable across the school.
- The principal has maintained a clear direction of leadership to steer the school through the initial difficulties it has faced. Senior leaders accept that the 2017 examination results were not good enough. They have a good understanding of the performance of the school and the areas that require improvement.
- Staff support the principal in his drive to raise standards. They are held to account well by the current performance management arrangements and they feel supported by senior leaders. As a result, staff are well motivated and readily accept the professional development opportunities that they are offered. Newly qualified teachers are supported well.
- Key stage 4 pupils study English, mathematics, science and engineering, with a small number of optional subjects alongside these. These subjects provide a distinctive curriculum which meets the aspirations of pupils well. Senior leaders keep the key stage 5 curriculum under review and well-considered revisions are being adopted to extend the breadth of subjects offered in the future. As a result, the curriculum is evolving as the number of pupils and students increases.
- Pupils receive a well-organised programme of personal, social and health education and so experience a range of opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain. Pupils are respectful of different cultures and religions, and they understand our democratic processes and the importance of the law. For example, pupils clearly understand the importance of the concept of consent when sexual relationships are considered in the legal system.
- Senior leaders provide a growing range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting and cultural events which enrich pupils' experience. For example, robotics club, art club and the recently started rugby club.
- The mutual respect between pupils and teachers and the positive school climate help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Senior leaders consistently model positive attitudes and values. As a result, pupils accept each other readily, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- Senior leaders spend pupil premium funding on strategies that are specific to the needs of disadvantaged pupils. These strategies are having a positive impact on the progress of this group of pupils.

- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used appropriately to ensure that pupils receive support to meet their needs. The work of the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is raising further the achievement of these pupils.
- The support provided to the school in the last year by the South West Teaching Schools Alliance has been effective, for example in mathematics, where interim leadership of the department has been provided.
- Parents speak positively of the school. Most of those who responded to Parent View believe that the school is well led and managed and would recommend it to other parents.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body was appointed in April 2017. He made a thorough review of governance at that time and has ensured that the governing body understands all aspects of the school's work accurately. Consequently, governors are able to provide clear strategic direction for the school as it grows and develops.
- Governors are committed to the vision of creating a new type of school with a distinctive curriculum. The governing body draws many of its members from the school's strategic partners in education and industry. As a result, it is a skilled group which combines extensive experience with a passion for the school's mission. These skills are deployed well, for example to inform recent improvements to the line management and performance management processes.
- Governors provide effective oversight of the use of pupil premium funding and extra funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They make sure that the school meets its statutory duties for safeguarding. Governors are acutely aware of the weak performance of the school in the 2017 examination results. However, they understand the challenges faced by the school, and so they provide robust challenge and effective support to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that the school's policies and procedures are well organised and fit for purpose. Appropriate checks are made on all staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with pupils and students. Senior leaders work successfully with outside agencies such as the police and social services to ensure that pupils are kept safe. School records show that any concerns are logged promptly and followed up appropriately.
- A large majority of parents believe that pupils are happy and safe at school. Pupils and students who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe. Senior leaders listen carefully to their views through the regular 'student voice' meetings. As a result, pupils and students are confident that any concerns they raise are treated seriously and dealt with effectively.
- Senior leaders and governors receive appropriate training in safeguarding. They update staff regularly so staff are alerted quickly to particular issues arising in the local area.

Consequently, there is a culture of vigilance that runs throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently effective across the school and so pupils' progress varies widely. Over time, the quality of teaching in key subjects such as English, mathematics and engineering has not been high enough.
- Teaching is not sufficiently challenging to stretch the most able pupils and enable them to develop secure knowledge and skills.
- Senior leaders have been successful in developing teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Teachers use a consistent approach to assessment which is effective in highlighting gaps in pupils' understanding. However, too little use is made of this information in subsequent learning activities and so some pupils' misconceptions remain.
- Teaching in English is improving quickly. Across the school teaching develops pupils' literacy skills in many subjects. Typically, teachers highlight key words and discuss them. However, teaching does not yet place enough emphasis on developing pupils' writing and so pupils' ability to express themselves in writing is not well developed.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Teachers know their pupils well and so they are able to support them effectively. Pupils respect their teachers and particularly appreciate their willingness to give extra time to help them when necessary.
- Teaching in key stage 4 science is well planned and uses practical work effectively to enthuse pupils. As a result, pupils are motivated to succeed and develop their scientific knowledge well.
- Teachers use the school's extensive links with businesses and other organisations well to enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, a Royal Navy project, to create a remote controlled amphibious vehicle, deepened pupils' understanding of the design process.
- Homework is set regularly according to the school's policy. Pupils' learning is extended appropriately by relevant homework tasks.
- Teachers support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Teachers and teaching assistants assess pupils' needs accurately and use innovative approaches to give them the individual help they need.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that pupils are well taught at this school. Many parents commented that the school's distinctive curriculum has made a positive difference to their child's motivation to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are proud to be part of the school community. Pupils are expected to wear smart, professional clothes of their own choice. They observe this dress code well, and

many say that this makes them feel respected and valued.

- Pupils feel safe at school. Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught about risks to their safety and so pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different circumstances.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils say that any sort of bullying is rare and they believe that it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff if it does happen.
- Pupils are well cared for and value the support that they receive from their teachers. Staff make sure that pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy, physically, mentally and emotionally.
- The school provides high-quality careers education and guidance. Teachers use the close relationship between the school and the local business community, along with strong university links, to ensure that pupils' aspirations are high.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The rate of pupils' attendance is consistently low. Too many pupils, particularly in Year 11, do not attend school regularly enough and this has a detrimental effect on the progress they make.
- In 2016 and 2017 the rate of persistent absence at the school was well above the national average. Senior leaders have made strenuous efforts to reduce these figures with some success for current pupils.
- Pupils conduct in lessons is typically polite. Pupils generally show respect to their teachers and to each other and this leads to a positive atmosphere in most lessons.
- The behaviour of pupils throughout the school at break and lunchtime is calm and orderly. Pupils appreciate the modern facilities the school provides and they treat the building as a professional working environment. There is little litter or graffiti around the site.
- Teachers use a 'code of employability' to help those pupils who find it difficult to meet the school's expectations of behaviour. This has been largely successful and, consequently, few pupils are excluded from the school. Most parents believe that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The first cohort of pupils to move through key stage 4 have not made the progress they could be expected to have made in engineering. Consequently, in 2017, their attainment in engineering disciplines was not as high as they were capable of.
- Pupils' progress in GCSE English was below average in 2017. Pupils' progress from their starting points is not sufficiently rapid and so their skills are not well developed, particularly in writing, by the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' progress in GCSE mathematics was in line with the national average in 2017. While many pupils successfully perform calculations and other operations, they do not

yet have a secure grasp of the underlying mathematical principles.

- Pupils enjoy science, particularly the practical element of the subject. Last year, pupils' progress in GCSE science subjects was in line with the national average. Current key stage 4 pupils' progress in science is good as a result of the strong teaching in this subject area.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. Pupils' work in their books and other inspection evidence indicates that many of the most able pupils do not have a deep understanding of the topics they are learning about.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in GCSE English and mathematics. The proportion of these pupils who attain at least grade 5 in both of these key qualifications is in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils with low levels of attainment are supported well by teaching which meets their needs. Therefore, they develop confidence and make sound progress from their starting points.
- In most subjects, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because the support provided for them is well coordinated and effective. In particular, pupils with dyslexia receive specialist help which enables many of them to overcome their difficulties.
- A very high proportion of pupils secure places in education, training or employment when they leave. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps as a result of the work-based experiences, contact with employers and the good advice they receive.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Sixth-form students study a combination of academic and vocational courses. The quality of teaching varies across these courses and so students' outcomes are not consistently good.
- In 2017, students' progress on academic programmes was below average compared to students with similar starting points nationally. In particular, students' progress was weak in the mathematical studies qualification and in A-level mathematics. As a result, many students did not attain the grades they were capable of on academic programmes.
- Students' progress on applied programmes was above average last year. Most students made good progress on the engineering studies and applied science level 3 Diploma programmes, and so attained well in these subjects.
- The rate of students' attendance in the sixth form is low. Leaders have changed the arrangements for home study and are introducing better systems for logging students' attendance, but these have yet to make an impact.
- The sixth form is an integral part of the school. Most teaching is shared across key stages 4 and 5. Teaching is not yet providing the most able students with the challenge they need to make strong progress and so attain the highest grades on their academic courses.
- Sixth-form leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching has become more robust this

academic year, and so they now have a clear understanding of areas that need to be improved. They are ambitious for students and share the principal's high expectations of students' progress. They have credible plans to raise the quality of teaching and these are beginning to take effect.

- Teachers know their students well. They provide students with personalised guidance which ensures that students' study programmes are tailored to individual needs.
- A dedicated employer engagement officer makes sure that work-related experiences, including work experience placements, are built into all study programmes. As a result, current students have strong insights into the engineering sector. Last year, all of the students who left the sixth form went on to take up places at university, go into apprenticeships or secure employment.
- Students' personal development and welfare is promoted well by all staff. Students develop confidence as a result of the positive attitudes that staff consistently model. The majority of students use their independent study time wisely.
- Senior leaders provide a programme of events and speakers which raises students' awareness of, for example, road safety issues for young drivers. Consequently, students understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.
- Students who begin study programmes without attaining a grade 4 in GCSE English and/or mathematics receive suitable tuition and so make progress towards attaining these qualifications.

School details

Unique reference number	141749
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10042654

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	204
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	80
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Butler
Principal	Ian Crews
Telephone number	01626 240201
Website	www.southdevonutc.org
Email address	info@southdevonutc.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The principal was appointed in September 2014 to oversee the design of the new school. The school opened to pupils in September 2015.
- The school is a university technical college specialising in engineering, water and the environment. It is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Pupils join the school in Year 10 or in Year 12 for the sixth form.
- The school's principal partners are the University of Exeter, South Devon College, Centrax, Galliford Try, South West Water, the Environment Agency and Water Aid.
- The school receives external support from the South West Teaching School Alliance.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- A very small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at South Devon College.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards for secondary schools' performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and three other governors.
- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups, some of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students informally and met with a group of key stage 4 pupils and a group of sixth-form students. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils' and students' written work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour logs, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Inspectors spoke informally to one parent and considered emails from other parents and professionals who have recently worked with the school.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, 30 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Green

Her Majesty's Inspector

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