

Wolverhampton Vocational Training Centre

Millfields Road, Ettingshall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV4 6JP

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders have developed an ambitious culture that allows students and staff to thrive.
- There is a constant drive for improvement linked to a clear shared purpose. Leaders want every student to move on to employment.
- The curriculum develops employability skills well and helps students to make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders have plans to extend the range and level of qualifications that students can access.
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. As a result, most move on to employment, supported employment, training or college courses.
- High-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance help students to make informed choices when they leave the school.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. There is a calm and orderly environment.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. This aspect of the school's work is very well led.
- Absence rates are above the national average. Improving attendance is a key priority for the school.
- Personal development is promoted well. Students are polite and welcoming but some find it difficult to apply their social skills in unfamiliar surroundings.
- There are some very high-quality elements of teaching in the school. When teaching is most effective, time is used well and staff deliver relevant and interesting activities that move learning on at an appropriate pace.
- Where teaching has less impact, staff do not use the information that is available to them to help all students make substantial progress from their different starting points. This slows down the progress made by the most able students in particular.
- Leaders are aware that staff need wider development opportunities to further improve their practice.
- Tutor time is not used effectively to consolidate learning.
- Although leaders collect a great deal of information about individual students, their system does not give them a clear overview of patterns of behaviour, attendance and progress. This makes it more difficult to use this information to inform further action.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve students' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - students access a wider range of qualifications at a higher level
 - teaching is consistently of the highest quality
 - all staff use information about prior learning to deliver lessons that allow groups of students, including the most able, to make substantial progress from their different starting points
 - learning time is used well and staff regularly provide students with activities that engage them
 - tutor time is used effectively
 - staff have access to further training opportunities in order to improve their practice.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by taking effective action to:
 - improve attendance
 - help students apply their social skills in unfamiliar contexts.
- Improve leadership and management by refining the system for analysing students' behaviour, attendance and progress so that it gives a clear overview that can inform subsequent action.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders have developed an ambitious culture which allows all to thrive. Positive relationships between leaders, staff and students support the good progress that students make.
- Senior leaders are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information to take effective action to enhance provision. There is a constant drive for improvement linked to a clear shared purpose. Leaders want every student to move on to employment.
- Leaders listen to, and act on, the views of students, parents and carers, employers, staff and outside agencies to realise their aim of 'achieving together'. There is a very positive ethos where students are well cared for and helped to have higher aspirations for themselves.
- Staff value the training that they access and respond positively to the feedback that they receive. However, leaders are aware that staff need wider development opportunities to further improve their practice.
- The curriculum is tailored to support the study programmes of the students. It develops employability skills and allows students to make good progress in a range of subjects. Leaders have plans to enhance the impact of the curriculum by ensuring that students have the opportunity to succeed in a wider range of accredited courses at a higher level.
- The curriculum promotes personal development very well and makes a marked contribution to students' positive behaviour and emotional well-being. All students benefit from work-related opportunities and many enjoy successful work experience with supportive employers.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities helps to enrich students' learning. They are given extensive opportunities to develop life skills and become increasingly independent. For example, students participate in outdoor pursuits, driving simulations, enterprise events and sporting activities. They also learn about money management, cooking, parenting, first aid and bicycle maintenance.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and opportunities to learn about British values are identified. Students are taught about cultures that are different to their own and they are tolerant and respectful of the beliefs of other people. Leaders and staff openly promote diversity and equality of opportunity, but they are aware that British values are not deeply embedded within the curriculum. Plans are in place to address this.
- Leaders collect a great deal of information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of individual students. However, their systems for analysing this information are not fully developed. This means that leaders cannot easily get a clear overview of patterns of behaviour, attendance and progress to inform further action.
- Leaders use additional funding for students who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities very well. It is used for staffing and resources to help students

access the range of opportunities that are available at the school. This helps to improve their progress.

- Leaders and staff work well with parents. Regular contact, attendance at events and close working relationships between parents and staff help the students to do well at the school.
- The trust offers a range of useful services and effective support to the school. It provides training and development opportunities, sharing of good practice, assessment moderation, quality assurance and financial support.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the board of trustees and the joint local executive governing body. Both offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders.
- Those responsible for governance have a wide range of skills and experience that they use to hold leaders to close account. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well with leaders to strive for further improvement.
- Governors and trustees carry out their statutory duties well. They ensure that resources are well managed, that additional funding is used effectively and that safeguarding procedures are robust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. As this aspect of the school's work is very well led, there is a strong safeguarding culture. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and duties.
- All staff are well trained and kept up to date about safeguarding issues. Leaders and staff use the processes for reporting concerns well. Referrals are timely and staff use outside agencies appropriately.
- The school's single central record of employment checks is compliant, and records are stored securely. Students are taught to stay safe in a range of situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff know the students well and usually plan activities that fully engage them in learning so that they make good progress. Staff work well together and use positive relationships to help students to learn. Students respond well to praise and work productively together. They are very happy to support each other's learning.
- When teaching is most effective, staff provide students with challenging activities that are relevant to the world of work and link closely to students' personal learning pathways. Staff use targeted questions, combined with their experience and subject knowledge, to develop skills and deepen students' understanding.
- Staff regularly take opportunities to promote reading, writing, mathematics and communication in vocational subjects. For example, inspectors saw mathematical skills

being applied well in a construction lesson, communication skills being developed in motor vehicle maintenance and literacy skills being reinforced in hair and beauty lessons. Leaders are keen to ensure that core skills are deeply embedded in every subject area.

- Students have developed the capacity to learn from their mistakes. They use verbal feedback from staff particularly well to improve their work. However, a small number of staff do not model the correct use of written and spoken English.
- When teaching is less effective, activities do not challenge students, particularly the most able, to make rapid progress. At times, staff do not use the information about students' prior attainment to provide activities that ensure all students make strong progress from their different starting points.
- Occasionally, time is not used well to move learning on. Tutor time, in particular, is not used effectively to consolidate or develop learning.
- Assessment is accurate, and the school gives parents clear information about how students are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Regular meetings with parents give them opportunities to review their child's progress with staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good. Staff develop students' self-confidence by giving them opportunities to succeed. Personalised support, combined with high expectations, help them to develop their independence.
- High-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance help students to make informed choices when they leave the school. They are very well prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Students are taught how to be successful learners. They are happy to talk about their learning and they are proud of their achievements. Students are polite and welcoming, but some still find it difficult to apply their social skills in unfamiliar situations.
- Personal development is a core part of the school's curriculum. Emotional well-being is promoted very well and staff offer appropriate levels of personalised support. Healthy eating is encouraged, but leaders are aware that some students need more opportunities to take regular exercise.
- Bullying is rare and students are confident that staff will deal quickly and effectively with any incidents should they occur. Students are usually very kind to each other.
- Students are taught to use the internet appropriately, and they learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. For example, they are taught about how to protect themselves from the dangers of grooming and how to stay safe in the workplace. Robust systems to promote health and safety are evident in all vocational settings in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students behave well in lessons and usually show a keen interest in their studies. The learning of others is very rarely disrupted but, on occasions, students lose interest when activities do not fully engage them.
- Students conduct themselves well around the school. They eat and chat with the staff during social time. This contributes to the school's calm and orderly environment.
- Students' behaviour is managed well. Staff are trained in de-escalating situations and instances of inappropriate behaviour are declining.
- Students who find it more challenging to manage their own behaviour are effectively supported to improve their conduct. There have been no permanent exclusions and very few students have had fixed-term exclusions.
- Some students always attend regularly and others have been helped to improve their attendance. However, overall absence rates are too high. Improving attendance is a key priority for the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most students are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their life skills and to become increasingly self-assured. Students are helped to become more independent and supported to move on to appropriate destinations. As a result, most move on to employment, supported employment, training or college courses. Over time, the proportion of students who have moved on to education, employment or training has increased.
- The vast majority of current students are making good progress in a range of vocational subjects and English and mathematics.
- Students achieved a wider range of qualifications at a higher level in 2017 than in 2016. Outcomes in vocational subjects, particularly cooking and childcare, were strong.
- Strengths in cooking and childcare have been maintained. Current students are making particularly rapid progress in these subjects. They are also making accelerated progress in motor vehicle maintenance, sports leadership, and employability and personal development qualifications.
- Outcomes in English and mathematics improved in 2017 and some current students are performing very well in these key subjects. However, the progress students make in English and mathematics has not matched their accelerated progress in vocational subjects since the school opened.
- Leaders have correctly identified improving students' reading as an area for development. Staff are beginning to promote reading more effectively through their subject areas. Consequently, students are becoming more confident readers.
- Staff track the progress of individuals well. However, leaders are aware that they need to refine their analysis of progress and outcomes to give them a clearer overview to inform actions.
- Over time, the most able students have not consistently reached the higher levels of

attainment. Consequently, leaders are taking action to ensure that all students are regularly challenged to make rapid progress. Leaders are also reviewing the curriculum and the range and level of accreditation that the school offers.

School details

Unique reference number	142123
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10048386

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	16 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Robert Turton
Executive Headteacher	Ann Brown
Telephone number	01902 552274
Website	www.wvtc.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@wvtc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wolverhampton Vocational Training Centre is a small special school for students aged 16 to 19. It opened in September 2015 as part of the Central Learning Partnership Trust. It moved to the current site in September 2017. Previously it was situated in temporary accommodation.
- The school has a joint local executive governing body with Westcroft School, which is also part of the trust. Governance is provided by the trust and the joint local executive governing body.
- All students have an education, health and care plan. The students have a range of complex cognitive needs.
- Most students are White British. The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are very small.
- The school does not use off-site alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons and observed learning on both days of the inspection. Some of these visits were with leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to students formally and informally, and observed behaviour in lessons and during social time.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the centre manager and other leaders and staff. The inspectors considered 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and three members of the joint local executive governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair.
- There were not enough responses to Parent View for the results to be analysed.
- Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and information about students' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and inspectors looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Quigley

Ofsted Inspector

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