

Bristol Technology and Engineering Academy

New Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8SF

Inspection dates

16–17 October
and 13–14 November 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in key stage 4. This is because the quality of teaching is too inconsistent to promote good progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils' standards of literacy are low. Consequently, too many of them struggle to express themselves well enough.
- Teachers do not consistently meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Consequently, some pupils find work too easy, while others struggle with tasks that are too difficult for them.
- Leaders have not been able to improve teaching or prevent staffing and recruitment difficulties having a negative impact on pupils' education. As a result, pupils' progress is limited in some subjects.
- Governors' oversight of the school's work has not focused closely enough on raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Too many students in the sixth form do not finish the courses that they start on.
- Attendance in the sixth form is not good enough. This prevents students who have high rates of absence making the progress of which they are capable.
- The leadership team is small and some are inexperienced. This is preventing leaders from monitoring the work of the school as closely as they should and restricting the rate of improvement.
- At times, too many pupils do not have positive attitudes to learning. They take little pride in their work and disrupt the learning of others, especially when the quality of teaching is weaker.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils who join the school to specialise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are well served by the curriculum they are offered.
- School leaders have developed strong links with local employers. This helps to ensure that those students who actually complete their 16 to 19 study programmes go on to further education, employment or training.
- Staff provide a nurturing environment for a significant number of pupils who have not thrived in their previous schools. As a result, most pupils make better progress than they did before they joined the school.
- Leaders and teachers know their pupils well. Pupils say that they enjoy belonging to a small school. They feel that they are known as individuals.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve governance, leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders improve the monitoring of teaching quality
 - leaders have higher expectations of pupils' achievement
 - governors' critical oversight contributes to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - middle leaders are given the training to enable them to have a greater impact on the improvement of teaching
 - leaders evaluate the effectiveness of additional funding in order to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement, including in the sixth form, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of pupils' behaviour, presentation and what they can achieve
 - teachers provide work that meets the needs of pupils of different abilities
 - pupils develop more consistently positive attitudes to learning
 - teachers provide guidance to pupils that helps them improve their work.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that leaders and teachers set high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Improve provision in the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - attendance improves rapidly
 - students are supported so that a higher proportion are able to complete the courses they start on
 - students benefit from appropriate work experience as part of their studies.

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

Requires improvement

- Leaders are overstretched. Too many responsibilities rest on too few senior staff. This is having a detrimental effect on pupils' education. Leaders face significant challenges, including the recruitment of pupils and staff. The school is only half full and there has been a high turnover of staff in some subjects. The school has a significant financial deficit. All these factors combine to have a negative impact on pupils' education and leaders' attempts to improve it.
- Some middle leaders are relatively new in post and are not yet ensuring that the quality of teaching in their departments is consistently good. They know the areas that need improvement. However, they do not monitor the quality of teaching closely enough. Middle leaders' assertions about the quality of teaching do not always match the day-to-day reality. Some strategies to improve teaching are relatively new and it is too soon to judge their impact.
- Leaders are not using additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND as effectively as they should. Strategies to raise achievement are not evaluated for effectiveness with sufficient robustness, so leaders are unclear about what is, or is not, working. Planned improvements to the way disadvantaged pupils are supported have not yet been implemented.
- Senior leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school. Only occasionally, however, have they been able to intervene successfully to improve the quality of teaching. For example, they rightly diagnosed a weakness in the teaching of literacy across the curriculum and commissioned training to address that. There was a significant improvement in results in engineering as a consequence. Due to the constraints on their capacity, however, leaders have not been able to bring about sustained improvements in teaching across the school.
- Leaders have a clear vision of the opportunities a University Technical College (UTC) can offer. They have designed a curriculum that provides a distinct and focused programme to pupils. It reflects the school's STEM specialism well and is unique in the local area. Those pupils who join the school because they are enthused by the specialism are engaged and stimulated by the subjects offered. They also benefit from strong links with local employers, many of whom come into school to talk with pupils about their specialisms.
- Many pupils choose to come to the school because of its STEM specialism. However, others join because they have had negative experiences at their previous schools. Many of this group of pupils face significant challenges in their lives, have poor disciplinary records and/or have poor attendance. Leaders have developed support structures that help pupils overcome the barriers they face and begin to make progress. As a consequence, most improve their attendance and behaviour and many make better progress than they did prior to joining the school.
- Although the number of responses to the Parent View survey was not high, a third of the parents who did respond would not recommend the school. A significant minority of respondents are not satisfied with aspects of the school's work, including leaders' responses to any concerns they raise.

Governance of the school

- Governors' oversight of the school has not been sufficiently focused on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors have not been successful in challenging leaders to raise the achievement of pupils since the previous inspection. Governors, as well as school leaders, face significant challenges in managing the school's finances and securing its long-term future. This has absorbed a considerable amount of their time and has reduced their capacity to support school improvement.
- The governing body consists of governors from a range of backgrounds with different, complementary skills and experiences. This has helped to improve the effectiveness of governance in financial matters and in forging stronger links with local employers. Governors have commissioned a review of governance to determine how they might carry out their work more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders recognise that they have an unusually high proportion of vulnerable pupils who face significant challenges in their lives. They rightly make ensuring the safety of these pupils their highest priority. The safeguarding team devotes much of its time to making certain that any pupils who are at risk are monitored and receive the support they need. Leaders ensure that effective systems and procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and understood by staff. They have commissioned audits from external consultants to ensure that systems are fit for purpose. These have been acted on appropriately.
- Staff know what to do should they have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of pupils. They understand the importance of being vigilant and know pupils well. Pupils feel safe at school because of its nurturing atmosphere and the generally positive relationships they share with staff.
- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are up to date and comprehensive. Leaders and governors responsible for appointing staff have had appropriate training to ensure safer recruitment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. Where teaching is weaker, it is characterised by a lack of challenge, in terms of both academic rigour and skills development. In these instances, teachers allow pupils to settle for superficial answers and sloppy thinking. Pupils quickly learn which subjects set higher expectations and which will settle for second best and they respond accordingly.
- Across the curriculum, teachers do not consistently set work that is tailored to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Consequently, the least able are not supported well to catch up and the most able pupils are not pushed to reach the highest levels of academic and technical attainment.

- Teaching does not consistently provoke deeper thinking. Too often, the work set is formulaic and pedestrian. Consequently, pupils do not exhibit positive attitudes to learning in some subjects, such as aspects of science. Sometimes, poor behaviour disrupts learning as pupils become disengaged because they are bored.
- Pupils sometimes do not know how to improve their work because the guidance they receive from teachers is insufficiently precise to be helpful to them. Many pupils lack the independence and resourcefulness to help themselves when they are stuck. They are too dependent on their teacher. This prevents pupils from making the progress they should.
- The quality of teaching of English is improving. Teachers enable pupils to consider appropriately challenging texts and discuss the author's intentions and their choice of vocabulary. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident writers, capable of structuring their responses in extended passages. Nonetheless, many pupils still have significant gaps in their literacy.
- Where teachers do set appropriately high expectations, for example in engineering, pupils respond well. Their work improves, and they show pride in what they can achieve.
- Pupils feel able to share their views and opinions in class because staff treat them as adults in a work environment. Pupils are encouraged to treat adults and each other with courtesy and respect. For example, this is evident in practical subjects, where pupils need to act in a mature way.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are too variable. Some pupils are enthused by the opportunities given to them by the school's curriculum and take pride in the work they produce, but others do not. Pupils' work also varies between subjects. In some cases, pupils' work shows considerable pride in their achievement in some subjects and is slapdash in others.
- A significant proportion of pupils who join the school in Year 10 have complex social, emotional or mental health needs. Their previous educational experiences have not been happy or successful. Many do not have positive attitudes to learning or school life. Nonetheless, as a result of teachers' efforts, the majority of these pupils do experience some success during their time at the school. Their behaviour, while still sometimes challenging, improves and pupils in key stage 4 attend school more regularly. This is the result of close monitoring and good pastoral support.
- Leaders and staff responsible for pastoral care know pupils well. They successfully build trusting relationships with pupils and their families, and this helps to counter the problems that pupils face, provides greater stability and strengthens their self-esteem. Nonetheless, a significant minority of pupils in key stage 4 have yet to develop consistently positive attitudes to learning.

- Pupils benefit from a rich and diverse personal, social and health education programme, which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Topical assemblies broaden pupils' cultural understanding and engage their moral thinking. For example, on Anti-Slavery Day, pupils listened attentively as they were asked to consider a local historical figure's involvement with the slave trade.
- The nurturing school environment encourages pupils to develop their self-confidence and get along with each other. Many pupils who spoke with inspectors or responded to the pupil survey commented that bullying is not a problem in the school. Others told inspectors that they joined the school because they felt uncomfortable in their previous, larger school, preferring a smaller school where everyone knows each other.
- Staffing difficulties and the distance pupils have to travel to school mean that there are few extra-curricular activities available to pupils. Pupils are disappointed by this aspect of school life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Too many staff do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour. In lessons, some teachers do not challenge poor behaviour effectively. Behaviour is poorer when the quality of teaching does not meet pupils' needs and when behaviour management is weak
- The behaviour of the great majority of poorly behaved pupils improves over the time they are in school due to the support that staff give them. The number of fixed-term exclusions is declining over time as a consequence. In 2018/19 they fell by two-thirds over the year.
- Pupils' overall rate of attendance is lower than for that of other schools. However, many pupils in key stage 4 had very low rates of attendance before they joined the school. Some had refused to go to school altogether. The majority of this group of pupils have improved their attendance, and many significantly so. Attendance rates in the sixth form are too low, however.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Recently, pupils at the end of key stage 4 have made insufficient progress since leaving their primary schools. This remains true for those currently attending the school. Some of this underachievement, but not all, is a result of the lack of progress they made before they came to the school. Most of the pupils have made better progress since they joined the school in Year 10. Nonetheless, many still have significant gaps in their learning.
- Pupils make better progress in the more vocational, practical subjects than in academic subjects, especially in some of STEM subjects. In BTEC engineering, for example, pupils did well. Almost three quarters achieved a good pass in 2018.
- The proportion of pupils leaving key stage 4 and moving on to appropriate learning or employment is higher than the national average. This is partly a result of the links the school has formed with local employers.

- Disadvantaged pupils, although small in numbers, have consistently made less progress than their peers across the full range of subjects since the previous inspection.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they do not acquire knowledge and develop skills sufficiently well across different subjects. Learning is not consistently well sequenced to enable pupils to consolidate their understanding before moving on to new learning.
- Pupils are now beginning to make better progress in English. They are increasingly able to analyse texts and discuss the author's intentions and vocabulary. Their progress is undermined, however, by the low standards of punctuation, spelling and grammar prevalent across the school. Even the most able pupils regularly misspell common words or miss out capital letters.
- Recent training for staff to improve pupils' literacy skills has had impact in some subjects. In engineering and chemistry, for example, teachers help pupils to improve their spelling and grammar. In other subjects, however, teachers let poor basic literacy slip by.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Too few learners complete their original whole study programme successfully. For example, of those who started their courses in 2016, only two thirds achieved the original qualification. Too many learners achieve a lesser qualification than they originally started, often due to poor attendance.
- Students' attendance is poor. This is because leaders do not chase up absences with the vigour that they do in key stage 4. Students' absence is a major factor in underachievement.
- Students' achievement on vocational courses is better than on academic courses. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that students are prepared for the world of work, with an emphasis on engineering and technology. Almost nine out of ten students who do actually complete their courses go on to education, employment or training, with over half taking up apprenticeships.
- Leaders now track students' progress closely. This is beginning to have some impact on improving progress. However, a significant minority of students are not on track to reach the standard expected of them due to the limited impact that teaching is having on their progress.
- Leadership of the sixth form has not been able to secure good quality teaching across the curriculum. The quality of teaching is too inconsistent. Too often, students are not pushed to reach the highest standards and so underachieve. In some subjects, such as engineering and in mathematics, however, students are engaged by questioning that stimulates them and challenges their thinking.
- The development of English skills for those that do not have GCSE grade 4 is strong and significantly above the national post-16 average. However, the development of mathematics skills is weaker.
- The development of the learners' understanding of the needs of STEM industries is a strength of the school. For example, learners attend a whole-college weekly tutorial called 'World of Work'. This involves various STEM employers presenting their industry and the related progression routes. This is reinforced by access to weekly, impartial

careers advice and guidance. Despite this effective work-related learning, too few students have access to relevant, high-quality work experience placements.

School details

Unique reference number	139669
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10053366

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	219
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Watkins
Principal	Rhian Priest
Telephone number	0117 983 8080
Website	www.bteacademy.co.uk
Email address	rhian.priest@bteacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 April 2015

Information about this school

- Bristol Technology and Engineering Academy is a 14 to 19 University Technical College (UTC). It is much smaller than most secondary schools, but similar in size to other UTCs. The school opened in September 2013 with students in Years 10 and 12 only.
- Students join the school at the start of Year 10 from a very wide range of secondary schools in the west of England, mainly from Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Some students also join at the start of Year 12 from other schools.
- The school's aim, embodied in its curriculum, is to promote STEM subjects in a vocational context and prepare pupils for the world of work. Many pupils joining the school opt to do so because they have an interest in these subjects.

- The school is seeking to join a multi-academy trust. Negotiations are ongoing. However, the school's financial difficulties are contributing to uncertainty over its long-term future.
- The school receives support, by way of a service level agreement, from Olympus Academy Trust in respect of financial management and premises.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The proportion of girls, though higher than at the time of the previous inspection, is still well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who also receive support is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils attend classes at a neighbouring school for certain subjects, such as physical education.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Very occasionally, Ofsted will delay publication of a report to ensure full consideration of concerns identified during the quality assurance process. On a rare occasion, this process may suggest gaps in the evidence base, which will cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at Bristol Technology and Engineering Academy. Inspectors first visited the school in October 2018. Inspectors returned in November to gather additional information to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection is secure.
- Inspectors observed learning and behaviour in lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the executive principal of a local multi-academy trust which provides some support to the school. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Baker-Dearing Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, progress information and notes from a visit of an adviser from the Department for Education. Inspectors also scrutinised information pertaining to the monitoring of teaching, attendance and exclusion records, and information relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed pupils' conduct around the school, during assembly and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- The lead inspector took account of 17 responses to the online Parent View survey with associated free-text comments, 19 responses to the pupil survey and 15 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kirsten Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Nelson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Lovett	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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