

Bolton UTC

Deane Road, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL3 5AG

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The acting principal and his senior leadership team have developed an inclusive and supportive community. Together with staff, they have overseen rapid improvements in every aspect of the college.
- Governors are committed to the ethos of the UTC. They have challenged and supported senior and middle leaders in their journey of improvement.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress.
- At times, some of the most able pupils and sixth-form students do not receive sufficiently challenging work in all subjects.
- Leaders are taking determined action to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics. Standards, as in other subjects, are rising.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use questioning well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the college. Pupils feel safe and well supported.
- Pupils now benefit from a well-coordinated programme of careers advice and guidance. As a result, nearly all pupils move into education, employment or training related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons.
- The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils. It is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. Pupils and students are respectful and tolerant of others.
- The sixth form is good. Students benefit from strong teaching. Consequently, they make good progress in academic and vocational courses.
- Some middle leaders are new to post. They are at the early stages of developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in how to improve the teaching in their subject areas.
- In 2017/18, pupils' attendance dipped. It is now improving. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not attend college regularly enough.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed and sustain improvements in mathematics teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Improve outcomes further by ensuring that the most able pupils and sixth-form students are challenged consistently to achieve the highest standards.
- Further develop the role of middle leaders so that they have the knowledge and skills to make further improvements to the quality of teaching in their subject areas.
- Build on the effective work undertaken so far to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The acting principal is well supported by his senior leaders and governors. They have developed an inclusive community with a culture of high expectations that is shared by pupils and staff. All aspects of the college, including safeguarding and the quality of teaching, have improved. Pupils make good progress during their time at Bolton UTC.
- The acting principal has been instrumental in nurturing a culture of honesty and respect. His vision for the college is focused on ensuring that pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in STEM subjects. Leaders have developed a positive sense of teamwork among the staff. Morale is high and staff feel encouraged and valued.
- Leaders have introduced a range of strategies to improve teaching across the college. They ensure that regular checks are made on the quality of teaching through observations of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff value the professional development that they receive.
- Senior leaders have developed a clear set of expectations for the work of middle leaders. Middle leaders feel increasingly held to account and have contributed to the college's improvement. Some middle leaders are new to their post. They are committed to their roles, but some are at the early stages of developing their skills and knowledge. Middle leaders are well supported in improving their areas through a structured programme of training.
- Leaders have improved the reliability and accuracy of the assessment of pupils' achievement. This enables staff to identify pupils who may be falling behind and provide support to pupils who need it. Leaders and staff moderate their judgements about pupils' work within the college, and with the local cluster of schools and at network meetings.
- Leaders have taken effective action to review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils and provides them with a broad and balanced education. The college's curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of STEM subjects through GCSEs and vocational subjects. Pupils spoke very positively about the advice that they receive in choosing which subjects to study. They enjoy using the specialist facilities, particularly the dental, medical and robotics engineering equipment.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports such as rugby, netball and basketball. These activities help to promote their health and well-being. They have the opportunity to participate in trips and visits, such as to local hospitals. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about STEM enrichment, such as robotics competitions and trips to the sponsor university's institute of motorsport to take part in national competitions in motorsport engineering.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. Pupils learn about British values, including the rule of law and democracy through assemblies and form time activities.
- Leaders and staff have a good awareness of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged

pupils face. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, due to the well-targeted spending of pupil premium funding.

- Additional funding is used effectively to support pupils with SEND. Leaders establish the needs of these pupils as early as possible. They provide extra help through, for example, one-to-one support. Leaders make suitable provision for pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and their examinations.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said they would recommend the college to others.
- Leaders and governors have benefited from support and challenge from a range of external providers over the past two years. This support has helped them to improve the standard of education in the college.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved. Recruitment of new members has increased expertise on the governing body. Governors are passionately committed to the ethos of the UTC. As one governor commented: 'We want the UTC to be the destination of choice and for pupils and students to be happy and learn about STEM subjects.'
- The acting principal has been well supported by governors in his efforts to improve the quality of education. Governors have a secure understanding of the college's strengths and priorities for further development. They are kept well informed through the acting principal's reports. Governors provide more effective challenge to senior and middle leaders through regular meetings with them. Minutes of the governors' meetings show that members ask probing questions of leaders. This challenge has contributed to changes in curriculum and in teaching and learning. Current pupils are, as a result, making better progress over time.
- Governors receive appropriate training. They fulfil their statutory duties well, including the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors took effective action to address weaknesses in safeguarding identified in the previous inspection. They ensure that a strong culture of vigilance underpins all aspects of the college's work. Leaders have improved safeguarding policies and procedures. Checks on the suitability of staff are thorough and appropriate. Safeguarding training for all staff is up to date and includes protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Staff have a good awareness of child protection issues and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Leaders keep detailed records and ensure that referrals are made in a timely manner. They work effectively with external agencies and parents to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children feel safe and are well cared for in college.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use questioning successfully to probe and develop pupils' understanding. This leads to strong progress across a range of subjects.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. This enables pupils to learn more effectively.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors say that teaching is much better than before. They value the extra support that they receive to practise for their examinations in after-college sessions.
- Leaders have established 'non-negotiables' for lessons, such as pupils having the correct equipment so that they are ready to learn.
- Teachers address pupils' misconceptions well. Observations of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils have opportunities to revisit topics that they have found difficult so that they build on their knowledge and understanding.
- Most teachers set work that is matched well to pupils' learning needs. However, the work set for the most able does not always challenge them enough to make the progress they could.
- There is an increased focus on developing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their reading, vocabulary and writing skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers of mathematics are helping pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Leaders acknowledge that pupils need to make even better progress in mathematics to overcome weaker teaching in the past.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their practical skills through a range of investigative activities in science.
- Most teachers provide pupils with feedback in line with the college's revised marking policy. This helps pupils to improve their work further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The college's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Bolton UTC is a welcoming and caring community. An increasing number of pupils join during the college year. They are helped to settle in quickly and grow in confidence.
- Leaders have developed a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme which helps to develop pupils' understanding of equality and diversity. Pupils are well informed about potential personal risks, such as drug addiction, knife crime and gang culture.
- Pupils said they feel that staff treat them with respect. Pupils show tolerance and

respect for each other regardless of their ethnicity or background.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They understand how to stay safe, including when using social media.
- In lessons, most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils show pride in their work, which is consistently well presented.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare. They know whom to approach if it does happen. Pupils reported that teachers deal with bullying effectively should it occur.
- Pupils enjoy taking on leadership responsibilities, such as representatives in the college council. Their views on issues, including local partnerships, have influenced college policy.
- Leaders have improved the quality of careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils benefit from impartial careers advice, visits to universities and employers, and work experience. Some pupils receive mentoring at a local university, which helps to raise their aspirations. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their next steps when they leave college.
- Pupils wear their uniforms proudly. They respect the college environment and keep it free from litter.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The college is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful to each other and staff. They socialise well during breaktimes and lunchtimes. There is a good level of staff supervision, which helps to ensure that pupils are punctual to lessons.
- Most pupils behave well in lesson and listen carefully. They support each other well during learning activities.
- Fixed-term exclusions have declined markedly over time and are now below the national average. This is because leaders have improved the level of pastoral support and established high expectations of behaviour.
- The overall rate of attendance for 2017/18 was slightly below the national average for secondary schools. This is because of the absence of some pupils who have a high level of medical need, as well as those who miss learning due to holidays taken during term time. Leaders are doing all that they can to improve attendance. For example, together with the attendance officer, they follow up absences through formal warning letters, attendance meetings with parents and referrals to external agencies. Leaders and staff have had some success in improving the attendance for individual pupils. However, current information on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils shows that this group still has a higher rate of absence than others in the college.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils start the college in Year 10. However, the published results for Year 11 in 2018 reflect their progress in key stage 3 in other schools as well as in their time at Bolton

UTC. Leaders' own information shows that many pupils arrive in Year 10 having made little progress in key stage 3. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in the college make strong progress.

- In 2018, pupils' progress from their end of key stage 2 starting points to the end of Year 11 was below the national average in a range of subjects. In mathematics, published information shows progress to be significantly lower than the national average. Nevertheless, most pupils achieved a pass or above in applied sciences and health and social care qualifications.
- Pupils receive very effective support and guidance. Consequently, a high proportion of Year 11 pupils who left the college in 2018 went on to further education, apprenticeships or employment, most linked to STEM subjects.
- Leaders have worked effectively with a range of providers to improve the accuracy of baseline assessment in Year 10. College data, observation in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that current pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Over time, outcomes in mathematics have been weaker than in other subjects. Work in pupils' books and the college's assessment information indicate that pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics are improving strongly. This is due to the improving quality of teaching. Evidence shows that pupils are increasingly able to use and apply their mathematical skills. Nevertheless, further improvements are required in outcomes for mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils made progress between the end of key stages 2 and 4 that was in line with other pupils nationally in 2018. Current assessment information and pupils' work show that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress.
- The very small number of pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points because of targeted support from teachers and other adults.
- The most able pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done last year. Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives to open up opportunities for the most able pupils. Evidence shows that their progress is improving across a range of subjects. However, at times, a lack of challenge for some of them hampers their learning and they do not make enough progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan lessons which engage students.
- Students' progress in academic and vocational subjects has improved over time. In 2018, progress in academic subjects was broadly average. Progress for the small number of students who studied vocational subjects was above average.
- College assessment information and work in students' books and folders show that the large majority of current students make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have developed an inclusive culture at the college which ensures that students are safe in their surroundings and happy in their studies.
- Students rightly acknowledge the harmonious surroundings and the significant

improvement in the behaviour of students. They enjoy supporting younger pupils to develop their reading skills.

- Leaders of the college ensure that the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met. They have extended their partnerships with local and national employers and nurtured collaborative working relationships to ensure that all students benefit from meaningful work experience placements. These build on their existing knowledge acquired through enrichment activities and studies at college.
- Students have access to a broad programme of careers information, advice and guidance to support their next steps in education, training or employment. They ensure that students have access to a range of information that help them to inform their choices, including further and higher education establishments, apprenticeship providers and employers. Consequently, a high proportion of all leavers in 2018 progressed to further study, employment and training in their chosen discipline.
- A small number of students enter the sixth form without attaining a GCSE grade C in English and/or mathematics. The proportion who achieved a grade C when they re-took their examinations in 2018 was broadly average.
- Leaders ensure that students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will support them in their future studies or careers. They ensure that the curriculum includes regular access to non-qualification enrichment activities which include a range of project-based learning activities with a range of employers. For example, students on the engineering pathway take part in an international challenge in constructing an electric vehicle in collaboration with a multi-national automotive employer.
- Most teachers diligently plan the curriculum and sequence the learning to meet the differing needs of students. They regularly use the improved assessment processes to check that students are developing new knowledge and skills. Through these regular assessments, teachers can identify those who are making the required progress and those who need additional support to help them to catch up, which is mostly successful. Conversely, higher-ability students are not challenged to achieve the higher grades of which they are capable.

School details

Unique reference number	141941
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10053608

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	159
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	73
Appropriate authority	Interim management committee
Chair	Bill Webster
Acting Principal	Liam McDaid
Telephone number	01204 374848
Website	www.utcbolton.org
Email address	reception@utcbolton.org
Date of previous inspection	28 February –1 March 2017

Information about this school

- University technical colleges (UTCs) are usually smaller than average-sized schools for 14- to 19-year-olds. They focus heavily, but not exclusively, on science, technology, engineering and mathematical subjects. All their technical, academic and practical learning is designed to be applied in the workplace. A college's specialism usually reflects the local economy. Bolton UTC specialises in health, science and engineering.
- The college's sponsor organisation is the University of Bolton. The college's governing body has ultimate responsibility for the quality of education provided.
- The college is supported by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, whose focus is on

promoting and supporting new and existing university technical colleges.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- No pupil attends alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the acting principal, other senior leaders, middle leaders, a group of staff, three members of the interim management committee, including the chair, and with a representative of the Baker Dearing Trust. Inspectors also spoke by telephone with representatives of employers.
- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in a wide range of subjects across the college. Several observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' and students' work in lessons and looked at a sample of work to evaluate learning over time in different subjects.
- Inspectors met with pupils and students, both formally and informally, to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils and students at breaktimes, lunchtimes, in registration periods and in lessons.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding information, minutes of governor meetings, the college's own assessment information, training arrangements for teachers, checks on the quality of teaching, the college's self-evaluation, and action planning documents.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View).

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Cocker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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