

University Technical College Leeds

2 Sayner Road, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 1LA

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across key stages 4 and 5.
- Some teachers do not plan to meet the needs of pupils from their different starting points. Furthermore, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not always supported effectively in class.
- Some teachers do not consistently follow the school's assessment policy or display strong subject knowledge. As a result, pupils sometimes make errors that are not addressed.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below that of their peers and other pupils nationally.
- Some pupils with low levels of literacy receive effective support with their reading skills in Year 11. However, this is not fully embedded across the school.
- Some pupils in Years 11 and 13 have gaps in their underpinning knowledge, skills and understanding. This is due to a legacy of weaker teaching over time and turbulence in staffing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils differs from other pupils with similar starting points. Leaders, including governors, are improving how they spend additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils but it is too early to see the effect of their recent actions.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has high expectations of each pupil and member of staff. He understands the founding aims of the school well and is successfully helping to achieve them.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance have improved markedly since September 2018.
- Highly effective teaching in some subjects, such as English and engineering, is leading to pupils making significant gains in their learning.
- Careers education is strong. Nearly all pupils progress to their elected choice of work. A large proportion of pupils secure sought-after apprenticeships.
- Pupils develop a wide range of employment skills. The school's excellent links with industry ensure that pupils can refine these skills during work experience, visits and employment.
- A strong culture of safeguarding exists.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the leadership of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attain well and make at least good progress in key stages 4 and 5 by ensuring that leaders, including governors:
 - address all unresolved staffing issues so that pupils benefit from stable and high-quality teaching
 - frequently evaluate the success of plans to spend additional funding so that they have a thorough understanding of which strategies are the most effective
 - support the weakest readers in Year 10 and beyond by expanding current reading intervention sessions to all pupils and not just those who are about to sit examinations.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attain well and make at least good progress in key stages 4 and 5 by ensuring that teachers:
 - use pupils' prior assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs and abilities effectively
 - know who the pupils with SEND are and fully understand their needs when planning learning activities that support them effectively
 - apply the school's assessment policy consistently
 - allow pupils more opportunities to consolidate and build on their developing knowledge and skills
 - further develop their own subject knowledge
 - effectively use a wide range of questioning to probe, challenge and assess pupils' understanding.
- Continue to improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by increasing further the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher, together with governors and trustees, is successfully improving the quality of education pupils receive. Since his secondment from The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust (the trust) in September 2018, the headteacher has successfully improved pupils' attendance and behaviour. Staff morale is high, the quality of teaching is improving and leaders' capacity to further improve the school is clear for all to see.
- The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that teachers and subject leaders know what is expected of them. Staff say that this has helped them to focus on, and improve, what really matters to them: teaching. Staff attend weekly training sessions. They effectively work together as a team and in subject groups to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding relating to new school systems and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.
- The curriculum is closely matched to the trustees' original aim of 'inspiring the next generation of leading engineers, scientists and innovators'. Pupils successfully learn new skills and competencies in lessons such as engineering and product design, becoming proficient when using complex machinery and cutting-edge technology. The extra-curricular opportunities for pupils are considerable. Many key stage 4 pupils regularly participate in projects, clubs or competitions such as robotics, green power racing, debating and robot wars.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Accordingly, plans to improve the school are closely matched to leaders' self-evaluation. Plans include suitably ambitious strategies that are spread out so that leaders and staff are not overburdened at any one time.
- Leaders are outward-facing and eager to learn from other successful schools and university technical colleges (UTCs). Several experienced external staff work in the school for part of the week, effectively supporting leaders and governors in areas such as employer engagement and subject leadership. Consequently, a significant number of employers support pupils in school or the workplace and subject leadership is much stronger now.
- A well-established 'values curriculum' contributes to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons, assemblies, group work and visits, pupils take part in activities that successfully develop their understanding of topics such as living in society, global citizenship and economics. In this way, pupils are well prepared to live in modern Britain, cooperate with others and make valuable contributions to team activities.
- Leaders are steadfast in their determination to only appoint the best teachers. However, the school continues to face difficulties in recruiting high-quality staff to teach some subjects, including mathematics, English, computing and geography. This, along with the instability in staffing at a senior level until recently, has led to pupils not making the progress they are capable of. Leaders know that this is a concern for pupils, parents and carers. Accordingly, leaders have made some new appointments and are actively looking for other ways to address this issue in time for the start of the

new academic year.

- More recently, leaders, including governors, are improving how they spend additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Plans are more precise. They are focused on individual barriers to learning rather than more generic ones. However, over time, additional funding has not had the desired effect. Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attendance have been poor. There is still work to do to ensure that all leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the effect each strategy has on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Some aspects of the school's work have not improved as quickly as others. Leaders' heightened focus on improving pupils' attendance and behaviour has meant that, although on the up, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not improved at the same pace.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body provide leadership that is strategic, realistic and community-focused. They work closely with leaders to establish industry links and partnerships. Governors are a familiar sight in school, often working with leaders on projects or attending meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of leaders' strategies.
- Governors say, and inspectors agree, that they have 'raised the bar' in terms of their expectations this year. Last year, governors recognised that leaders at all levels were not as effective as they could be. Consequently, governors took decisive action by moving some leaders on, appointing new staff and revising the school's appraisal process. Now, all staff have targets that are aligned to the school's priorities, such as continuing to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspection evidence and minutes from governing body meetings demonstrate that governors keep a watchful eye on the school's financial performance. Current economic pressures have required governors to ask more demanding questions of leaders. They now ensure that the financial and performance information leaders give them is more accurate than it has been previously. Furthermore, governors have appointed a new school business manager, improved financial forecasting, reduced school costs and renegotiated better contracts. In this way, governors are now in a stronger position to ensure the long-term viability and efficiency of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- During the inspection, leaders successfully resolved some minor administrative errors on the single central record, which is the document of checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with children.
- Staff are familiar with the risks pupils may face locally and further afield, particularly when travelling long distances to and from school. This ensures that the safeguarding curriculum is reviewed regularly, incorporating emerging risks such as knife crime and child sexual exploitation. Pupils learn how to stay safe in assemblies, in tutorial lessons (profile teams) and from many external speakers.

- Pupils say that they feel safe. They welcome the many opportunities to speak to an adult if something is worrying them. Staff use a new school tracking system to ensure that, when a pupil raises a concern about themselves or a friend, it is logged, forwarded to the relevant safeguarding leader and addressed without delay. Pupils say that staff follow up on all concerns that they are alerted to, no matter how irrelevant something may seem.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving across the school. However, the difference in the quality of teaching from the most effective to the least effective is sizeable. This is compounded by the continuing high turnover of staff in some subjects.
- Some teachers do not use pupils' prior assessment information effectively to plan lessons that meet pupils' differing needs. Many learning activities are not matched to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils' progress is inconsistent because the activities they are tasked with completing are not appropriately challenging.
- Pupils with SEND are not sufficiently supported in some lessons. Teachers do not always have a thorough understanding of who the pupils with SEND are or what their additional learning needs entail. Occasionally, inspectors observed some pupils with SEND making little or no progress because pupils did not fully understand the questions or because they were not given the support to do so.
- A small minority of teachers do not demonstrate a firm grasp of the subject content that they teach. Inspectors observed pupils being taught incorrect methods and content in mathematics and geography.
- Some teachers do not assess pupils' work with enough detail so that they have an accurate understanding of where pupils are in their learning. Questioning can be one-dimensional and used routinely rather than incisively. Teachers do not always use pupils' responses to questions to adapt learning activities when it is evident that pupils do not fully understand a new concept or struggle to recall an older one.
- Some teachers do not apply the school's assessment policy consistently. Pupils say that, when this occurs, it can affect their learning because teachers do not highlight errors in their written work.
- Pupils do not always learn new concepts in sufficient depth before they progress on to something new. Consequently, when pupils are dependent upon their earlier learning to complete a more challenging task, they sometimes struggle with the more recent activities because they have not yet mastered the basics.
- Pupils' levels of literacy on entry to the school in Year 10 are below average. Leaders ensure that the weakest readers receive frequent reading support when they are in Year 11. The school's own information demonstrates that pupils who receive additional support with their reading when in Year 11 make strong progress. However, similar reading intervention is not fully embedded across the school. Leaders have acted to address this. Recently, they have appointed an experienced English teacher to work with pupils in Year 10 who need early intervention and support with their reading.
- Teachers ensure that pupils learn a wide range of skills that will serve them well in the

workplace. The 'magnificent seven' skills are evident in most lessons or group activities. For example, teachers effectively intersperse opportunities into lessons so that pupils can be leaders or managers and develop their communication techniques. They also work in teams, solve problems, build their resilience, enquire and analyse and develop their creativity and ingenuity. During the inspection, Year 10 pupils worked closely with industry professionals to build a wooden pyramid. During the activity, pupils were assigned roles linked to aspects of the construction process, such as quality assurance and health and safety. Pupils worked well in teams and they could articulate the importance of their own role, describe a range of skills they were using and apply their new learning to other concepts or problems that may arise when constructing new buildings.

- Some very strong teaching exists across the school, particularly in English and engineering. In some of these lessons, teachers have developed excellent working relationships with pupils, display an infectious enthusiasm for their subject and contribute to pupils making strong progress over time. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher's careful planning, probing questioning and strong subject knowledge led to pupils developing their skills of inference while learning about transport in London during the Victorian times.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pastoral support for pupils is strong. Some staff are trained to an appropriate level so that they can support pupils and their families with a wide range of issues. For example, staff often act as a mentor to pupils who have concerns in relation to their social, emotional and mental health. Pupils can access ad-hoc support when needed or more formal counselling sessions each week.
- Well-developed links with industry professionals contributes to a highly effective careers education programme. Pupils regularly complete projects and visit employers in the fields of science, engineering and technology. Additionally, employers take part in interview days and careers discussions in school. In this way, pupils have a very clear appreciation of the skills and competencies they need to improve, and they develop early working relationships with prospective employers.
- Recently, more pupils demonstrate that they know how to act and behave like a professional. However, a minority of pupils do not always make the correct decisions when it comes to their learning. For example, when given the option, a minority of pupils do not apply themselves to their learning as well as they should. These pupils behave less well when lessons are taught by temporary teachers and some pupils do not complete their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders' efforts to improve the standard of pupils' behaviour has paid off. Although

there is still work to do to ensure that all pupils display consistently positive attitudes to learning, staff and pupils say that pupils' behaviour has improved markedly since September 2018.

- The new behaviour policy states that pupils should mirror the standards of behaviour that could be expected in the workplace. Most pupils live up to these expectations by ensuring that they are punctual to lessons, act maturely during social times and are polite to staff and visitors.
- The proportion of pupils who were excluded for a fixed period in 2016 and 2017 was above the national average. However, the school's own information demonstrates that the improving quality of teaching and increased expectations of pupils' behaviour are contributing to a decline in the proportion of pupils who are excluded for a fixed period this academic year. No pupils have been permanently excluded since the school opened in 2016.
- In the same way that pupils' standards of behaviour have improved, so too has their attendance. Pupils' attendance so far this academic year has improved by approximately 3% overall and persistent absence has nearly halved when compared to 2017/18. Rates of attendance and persistent absence are broadly average now. However, disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be absent or persistently absent from school than their peers or other pupils nationally.
- Leaders, and those with responsibility for pupils' attendance, now ensure that strategies to track and support pupils' improved attendance are applied consistently. Similarly, if a pupil's attendance declines, leaders ensure that parents receive warning letters, attend meetings to discuss any barriers which are preventing attendance at school or, in exceptional circumstances, are fined.
- The very small number of pupils who attend alternative education provision have improved their attendance considerably since starting their new school or placement. School leaders ensure that pupils are safe, attend well and make good progress by keeping in touch with staff at the alternative education provision or visiting the pupils to speak with them.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Stronger teaching, improving attendance and higher standards of pupils' behaviour across the school are contributing to attainment rising in some subjects, such as English, physics and engineering. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and continuing staffing turbulence mean that pupils' outcomes are not consistently strong across all subjects.
- The school's own information and scrutiny of pupils' work across a wide range of subjects demonstrate that current pupils do not attain as highly as leaders anticipated they would, following pupils' initial assessments in Year 10, including in mathematics, biology, chemistry and computer studies.
- Differences exist between the outcomes of boys and girls in key stage 4. Although not exclusive, boys' outcomes are stronger in subjects such as physics and computer studies and girls do better in subjects such as English and engineering.
- Low levels of literacy are hindering the progress of some pupils. This is because

teachers spend large parts of some lessons supporting pupils with their comprehension and understanding of texts, written questions or instructions. Consequently, the time teachers would usually assign to teaching subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding is reduced.

- Comparison between disadvantaged pupils' progress and that of other pupils nationally is not the most appropriate measure of performance for these pupils. This is because the UTC Leeds started educating pupils part way through their time in secondary school in Year 10. Notwithstanding this, inspection evidence demonstrates that nearly one in three pupils currently in the school are disadvantaged. The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are below those of their peers across a wide range of subjects.
- Historically, the proportion of pupils who stay on into the sixth form at the UTC Leeds is low. This is increasing more recently. However, nearly all pupils progress to appropriately challenging education, employment or training when they leave school in Year 11.
- Leaders carefully analyse the results from pupils' internal assessments. In doing so, leaders strategically place pupils into additional lessons during 'intervention Tuesday' support sessions. Pupils attend two 45-minute lessons every Tuesday morning to work with teachers on examination preparation or address any concerns pupils may have relating to subject content. Year 11 pupils say that this dedicated time with teachers is helping them to improve their understanding of more complicated concepts and ideas and increasing their confidence leading up to their GCSE examinations.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong across Years 12 and 13. As a result, students' progress varies within subjects and across all aspects of their study programmes.
- Some teachers do not identify, with precision, the students in class who may be struggling to understand new concepts. Consequently, students who need support with their learning do not always receive it in a timely manner. Additionally, some teachers do not provide students with suitable opportunities to develop their study skills or complete appropriately challenging work.
- Leaders have recognised that the quality of teaching requires improvement and have appointed new staff in subjects such as mathematics and computing. In addition, they are also providing further A-level training for mathematics teachers. However, the legacy of weaker teaching over time means that some students continue to display gaps in their underpinning knowledge and understanding, which impedes their current progress.
- Students do not routinely attend enrichment classes or events to enhance their wider study programmes.
- Students attend helpful careers events. They also receive individual support to apply for apprenticeships and higher education. This, along with stronger vocational teaching, contributes to nearly all students progressing to their chosen next steps. A very high proportion of students secure relevant apprenticeships.
- Most students complete work experience that relates to their future career aspirations,

including in engineering locally.

- Students generally behave well, arrive to their lessons on time and attend often. Relationships between students and their teachers are strong.
- Students say that they feel safe, can discuss concerns with their profile team leaders (form tutors) and that they appreciate one-to-one coaching or advice in some lessons.
- Students who did not attain grades 4+ in English follow appropriate courses. All students attained well in their GCSE mathematics courses elsewhere. The proportion of Year 12 students who resit their GCSE English examinations and attain a good pass is high.

School details

Unique reference number	142604
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10059027

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

Type of school	Technical
School category	University technical school
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	309
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Goldstone
Principal	Alex Burnham
Telephone number	01133 530 140
Website	www.utcleeds.com
Email address	enquiries@utcleeds.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 September 2016.
- Governance is via the UTC Leeds board of trustees. Some powers are delegated to the governing body and two committees: resources and standards.
- The current principal was appointed in September 2018. He is seconded from the trust for a period of two years.
- The school is funded by the Department for Education (DfE). It has industry partners, including: 4B Group; Agfa; Arla; CAE; EEF; Engineering UK; Ecco Safety Group; Leeds Chamber of Commerce; National Physical Laboratory; Northern Gas Networks; OPM Group; Royal Air Force; Siemens UK; Smart Buildings; Thorite; Unilever; and the

University of Leeds.

- The key stage 4 curriculum consists of 'core' subjects including mathematics, English, science and geography, 'specialist' subjects including engineering design and engineering manufacturing and 'personalised' subjects including GCSE product design.
- The key stage 5 curriculum consists of A-level mathematics for most students, engineering qualifications, including academic and technical qualifications, in addition to other A levels and an extended project qualification.
- One in 10 pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is above the national average.
- Pupils typically join the school at the start of Year 10 or Year 12.
- The vast majority of pupils are boys.
- The school has links with the UTC North Lincolnshire.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative education provision at Southways, Leeds and Ethos, Kirklees.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 34 lessons across the school. Many of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and trustees.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and a larger sample of pupils' workbooks across all subjects in key stages 4 and 5.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of two alternative education providers used by the school and a representative from the DfE who has been conducting monitoring visits to the school.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- An inspector listened to a group of Year 10 boys read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, analysis of performance information, action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and governor minutes.
- Inspectors considered the 27 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Twenty six members of staff and 28 pupils completed Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. All these responses were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Angus	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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