

Elutec

Yew Tree Avenue, Rainham Rd South, Dagenham East, Essex RM10 7FN

Inspection dates

12–13 June 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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- A history of poor teaching and lack of adequately trained teachers has left gaps in pupils' learning. Not all pupils reach their potential, especially the most able.
- Although leadership is now strong, pupils' and students' progress remain inconsistent across the school.
- Some teaching is effective but the quality is uneven across the school. Improvements to teaching are not yet ingrained into everyday practice.
- Too much of the teaching is not challenging enough. As a result, there are too many pupils who do not deepen their knowledge and skills.
- Some pupils and students have missed a lot of learning, especially in engineering. Leaders have improved provision but there is some way to go to make up for lost time.

The school has the following strengths

- Tenacious, resilient leadership has moved the school forward significantly over the past year.
- The systems for checking the quality of the school's work are rigorous. Leaders' capacity to sustain improvements is strong.
- Inadequate teaching is tackled well. There are effective systems to improve the quality of teaching. These are having an increasingly positive impact.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making better progress in English and mathematics than they have in the past.
- All students in Year 13 progress into education, employment or training. Careers guidance and links with local businesses are effective.
- Governance is strong. Governors share the principal's aspirational vision for the school. They support and challenge leaders effectively.

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?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that all pupils and students are given work that challenges them
 - ensuring that the gaps in learning are quickly narrowed.
- Improve outcomes further so that all pupils and students, especially the most able, achieve well.
- Continue to improve the quality of provision in engineering by:
 - improving teaching and learning further, and building on the gains already made, to ensure that practical skills and knowledge are taught effectively
 - raising pupils' confidence in their ability to succeed in the subject.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Elutec has improved considerably over the past year. A legacy of poor teaching and of inadequate outcomes, especially in the school's speciality of engineering, is being tackled successfully. Leaders' and governors' vision and ambition for the school are strong. This is giving a new impetus to improvement and is helping to drive the school forward.
- Leaders are not complacent. They know that the school faces significant challenges and that the sustainability of improvements needs constant vigilance. Leaders have not shied away from making some difficult decisions to improve teaching and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching is stronger.
- Outcomes are also improving. Over the past three years the proportion of pupils and students making good progress has risen. All students in Year 13 have gone on to education, employment and training. Last year, more than 60% went to study at university.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths, weaknesses and priorities for development. They have established effective strategies to tackle the weaknesses. For example, there are robust procedures for managing teachers' performance. Incisive evaluations, and support and advice, enable leaders to hold teachers to account.
- The funds the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils are used effectively. The wide range of interventions that these funds support are helping disadvantaged pupils improve their learning. For example, the one-to-one work with some pupils and the accelerated reading programme have a positive impact. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are starting to catch up with others nationally.
- After-school clubs and activities are used well to help achieve the school's aims. For example, after-school engineering sessions are being used to help pupils gain some of the necessary practical knowledge. Visits, visitors and events add to pupils' and students' personal development. The school is especially successful in expanding pupils' and students' awareness of the wider world. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The arrangements for careers guidance and information are secure. Increasingly, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Sixth-form students spend a week at the beginning of the year, looking at the opportunities for studying at university. All the current Year 11 pupils who have chosen not to stay at Elutec to study in the sixth form have had one-to-one careers interviews to help them make the right choices. However, some pupils feel that they have not received enough advice about their next steps. Despite this, all pupils move on to education, training or employment.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows the pupils in her care well. There is detailed information about pupils' needs and the support provided in classrooms is monitored regularly. As a result, pupils with SEND make similar progress to their peers.
- Despite these improvements, there are still some inconsistencies and the legacy of

poor leadership means that some weaknesses have not yet been eradicated. For example, recruitment and retention, although improved, remains fragile. Teaching and learning have also improved. However, the legacy of poor provision and staffing difficulties early in the year have hampered improvement.

- The distinctive feature of the curriculum at key stage 4, and in the sixth form, is the opportunity for all pupils and students to follow a course in engineering. This defines the school's character. However, weak teaching in the past and difficulties recruiting suitably qualified staff have limited pupils' and students' achievements. Recent improvements, including more stable staffing, have improved provision.
- Four pupils attend alternative provision. The school has ensured that this provision is tailored to the needs of pupils. For example, pupils attending alternative provision have appropriate plans for progressing to further study.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The interim board is small but its members represent a good range of expertise. Detailed records of governors' work show that they hold leaders to account for the school's performance thoroughly. They ask challenging questions and follow up issues determinedly. Governors provide leaders with challenge and support in equal measure.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They have an in-depth understanding of the challenges the school faces and its distinct educational aspirations. As a result, governors are clear about the priorities for improvement.
- Governors are suitably trained including in safer recruitment and in the 'Prevent' duty programme. Their oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective. Governors meet their safeguarding responsibilities well and their work contributes significantly to the welfare and safety of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safety and well-being of all pupils and students is a priority for leaders. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and staff take decisive action to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Pupils and students appreciate the opportunities provided by the school to help keep them safe. They confirm that they always feel safe; one pupil noted that it was 'the safest school'.
- Arrangements for vetting the suitability of staff are secure. Safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date, and the guidance is understood by staff. For example, staff know how to identify the signs of abuse and to whom to pass any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead, and deputy, are suitably trained. They ensure that all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep young people safe and provide appropriate training, which is updated regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are not yet good. There have been some important improvements to the quality of teaching over the past year. For example, leaders have recently recruited sufficient specialist teachers in engineering. However, it is early days and across the school teaching still varies too much. As a result, there remain inconsistencies in pupils' learning.
- Where teachers set challenging tasks, pupils and students are engaged well in their learning. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge well to ask searching questions that check understanding and provide support where necessary. As a result, pupils and students deepen their knowledge and skills to make good progress. Pupils and students enjoy learning new skills and go about their studies with determination. Where assessment is used to identify gaps in learning, it is helping pupils and students to catch up with their learning.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations are too low, and their planning does not take enough account of pupils' and students' needs. Consequently, pupils and students do not receive the stretch and challenge that they need to achieve the higher grades in external examinations. In some cases, teaching does not focus enough on asking questions that will help pupils gain new knowledge and skills.
- Since the beginning of the current term there has been more stability in staffing. As a result, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve in English, mathematics and engineering. Following the appointment of a new teacher in science, teaching in this subject is improving. For example, pupils and students whose learning was disrupted by staff changes, are now gaining the foundation knowledge they need to make progress.
- In English, some strong teaching is enabling pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the books they study. Work in some pupils' books show that impressive feedback helps pupils to improve their work most effectively. In a few subjects, learners' writing is weaker than their verbal communication skills.
- Relationships between pupils, students and teachers are positive. Most pupils and students are confident learners and they take increasing care over their work. Occasionally, they lose concentration and distract others from their learning if teaching does not meet their needs closely enough.
- Pupils and students receive regular, weekly opportunities to develop their reading skills. However, staff do not always check that the books pupils choose to read are suitably challenging. This limits pupils' progress.
- For the most part, pupils with SEND, and those who speak English as an additional language, are supported well. Where teachers work closely with teaching assistants, they set activities that meet their individual needs. This enables pupils with SEND to make similar progress to their peers.
- Young people participate enthusiastically in vocational learning. Teachers now have the necessary expertise to plan interesting learning experiences. In engineering, practical projects have purpose and need to be carried out to professional standards. Teachers are increasingly ensuring that learners develop their technical understanding in the work-related subjects. However, there is still some way to go for this to be fully secure.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, taught during form time, is broad. It supports pupils' and students' personal development well. The programmes for Years 10 and 11 have broadly mirrored each other this year but there are well-founded plans for more tailored programmes next year.
- Assemblies cover a wide range of themes and include inputs from external providers such as the police. Celebration of a wide range of festivals reflects pupils' cultural and religious heritages. These include Diwali, Hanukah, Chinese New Year, Ramadan and Easter. There are also thematic assemblies on topics such as individual liberty, tolerance, democracy and responsibility. As a result, the school promotes British values and an understanding of different cultural traditions effectively.
- Assemblies and form time are also used to promote pupils' and students' safety and welfare. For example, weekly sessions include safeguarding, bullying, health, finance, and preparation for work experience and examinations. There is also a focus on radicalisation and extremism, ensuring that pupils and students are aware of the issues.
- Pupils and students are mostly positive about the school and what it has to offer. They recognise the opportunities provided by staff to help them to keep safe and where to get support when they need it. Some pupils and students feel that they are not supported well. Staff give appropriate attention to health and safety, for example in the engineering workshops.
- A particularly positive initiative is the mentoring of a group of pupils identified as at risk of underachieving. The initiative has had a strong impact on the majority of the group of Year 11 pupils who were targeted to be involved. Many have developed their confidence and improved their attendance significantly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders and staff have created a strong climate for learning.
- Almost all behaviour observed outside of lessons was calm and demonstrated respect shown by students towards their peers. Behaviour in lessons is nearly always good, except on a few occasions where teaching does not provide enough challenge. Pupils and students are polite and courteous. They respect the school's building and facilities and take pride in the way they present themselves.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now close to average. This is the result of stronger teaching and work that is better matched to pupils' and students' needs. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced appreciably, as has the number who are excluded from school.
- Pupils and students say that bullying rarely, if ever, happens. The school's records

confirm that instances of poor behaviour and bullying have reduced. For example, the number of referrals to the 'inclusion room' has fallen substantially.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Many pupils who start at the school in Year 10 do so with a history of poor school attendance and achievement. Improved recruitment of teachers with strong subject knowledge and expertise is having a positive impact. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 are rising. However, outcomes remain variable within and across subjects.
- Assessment information confirms that attainment and progress are improving. The 2018 examination results for pupils in key stage 4 show that more pupils are reaching their targets and achieving the higher GCSE grades. This is especially positive because the school has no input into their learning at key stage 3.
- The achievements of students in the sixth form are also improving as a result of more stable staffing. Where students have had their learning disrupted by a lack of suitably qualified teachers, improved teaching and planning is helping them catch up.
- A number of students spoken to by inspectors said that they felt the school had let them down. They say that if it had not been for their own efforts, their achievements would have been less good. Nevertheless, in 2017 and 2018 all students in Year 13 progressed into education, training or employment. In 2018, 15 students out of a total of 23 gained places at university. Nine progressed onto apprenticeships or employment.
- Outcomes in English are starting to improve as a result of better teaching. Appropriately challenging work and some impressive feedback is helping most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to make better progress. However, this is not the case for all pupils, especially the most able. Some are still underachieving as a result of inconsistencies in teaching quality.
- Pupils' learning in mathematics and science in key stage 4 is also improving but remains more variable. This is because of the legacy of poor teaching and the difficulties recruiting well qualified staff. However, outcomes are starting to rise because inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are being tackled by leaders.
- Achievement in engineering is similarly variable but is getting better. Pupils and students make good progress in some aspects, for example in developing their practical skills. However, overall progress is still being limited by the legacy of poor staffing and missed time in workshops.
- Pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language are making better progress than previously. The strategies to support these learners are having a positive impact on their progress. However, there is still a way to go to ensure that all pupils and students achieve their full potential.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Students' outcomes are improving. However, some poor teaching and a lack of suitably qualified staff in the past have led to gaps in their learning. As a result, the provision for students in Years 12 and 13 is not yet good.
- Effective leadership and improved teaching are having a positive impact on students' achievements. Although there is still more to be done to ensure that all students achieve well, some make strong progress. However, the most able students should be doing better.
- Most students are positive about their education. For example, many of those spoken to said that they enjoyed the work in engineering and felt that they were making progress. However, some feel strongly that they have been let down by the changes in staff and lack of consistent teaching. Nevertheless, all pupils go on to university, an apprenticeship or employment. This represents a significant achievement.
- Students' personal development is good. Relationships between students and staff are positive. Extra-curricular activities extend students' learning well. They are provided with a broad range of information and guidance about careers. For example, university week provides them with opportunities to find out about their options and helps to raise their aspirations. Strong links with employers ensure that students are able to get high-quality apprenticeships with well-known national companies.
- The attendance of students in the sixth form is improving. So, too, is the proportion of the current Year 11 pupils who are staying on into the sixth form, which has increased significantly since last year. This illustrates the positive impact of the improved teaching and a more stable staff.

School details

Unique reference number	140945
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10088843

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

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	137
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	41
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Jenny Carpenter
Principal	Kim Donovan-Maddix
Telephone number	0203 773 4670
Website	www.elutec.co.uk
Email address	kdm@elutec.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 March 2017

Information about this school

- Elutec is a university technical college. It has three main sponsors: Ford Motor Company, University College London (UCL) and CEME.
- Elutec is smaller than the average secondary school and has students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. It specialises in design and engineering.
- Girls make up 18% of the school's roll.
- A third of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average.
- Almost half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is higher than

the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is below the national average.
- Four pupils attend alternative provision at Barking College.
- The school has been in new premises since September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across both key stages and in a range of subjects jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils and students and observed break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and folders across Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form where available.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, other staff and members of the interim board. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 45 responses to the pupil survey and 18 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation. This included: the school's self-evaluation and action plans; school policies; information about pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance; and minutes of meetings of the interim board.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector

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