

Inspection of The Elstree UTC

Studio Way, Elstree, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 5NN

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this school follow a very special curriculum. They study essential qualifications in English, mathematics and science. Pupils also enjoy great opportunities to learn and experience work in the creative media, arts and entertainments industry.

The school's strengths lie in its specialisms, including production technology and production arts and music performance. Pupils excel in these subject because they like what they are doing and staff teach their subjects well. By the end of their schooling almost all pupils go on to further study, training and employment.

It is an inclusive school. Its caring and supportive ethos helps those pupils who have missed schooling to re-engage back into meaningful learning. Staff treat pupils as individuals, find out what interests them and then go out of their way to meet their needs.

Pupils choose this school because they have a real interest in creativity, media and the arts. Behaviour and attitudes are good. Pupils conduct themselves well and are polite, mature, and sensible. Pupils say school is a safe place to be and they feel free from all forms of bullying.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The principal leads the school well. Governors share his ambitions and are proud of the school's creative ethos. Pupils do well in specialist subjects. This, and good careers guidance, ensures that pupils are well prepared for university, further training or the workplace. Last year, all pupils went on to the school's sixth form, apprenticeships or specialist colleges.

Pupils have not achieved as well in English, mathematics and science. However, the quality of education is improving. Leaders have reviewed what they want pupils to learn and have made changes to raise achievement in their subjects. Work in pupils' books is well organised and shows that all of them, including disadvantaged pupils, are learning well. Support for less able readers is new. More time is needed for this to become fully established.

A partnership with a local multi-academy trust has provided good support for teachers and leaders in improving achievement in mathematics and science. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Tasks enable them to build on what they already know and can do. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They develop good relations with pupils and manage behaviour well. Teachers assess pupils' prior learning on entry in Year 10 so they can gauge how well they are doing over time. An experienced leader is working to improve the quality of information that teachers have about the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are supported well with their work in English but less so

in mathematics and science.

Experiences gained from working in film and theatre events in and out of school help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Creative projects, work experience and regular opportunities to direct, produce and perform in the arts builds pupils' understanding and aids their personal development. The minimal time allocated to physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education does not encourage healthy lifestyles and limits pupils' wider understanding of different faiths and cultures, and the importance of physical activity.

In the sixth form, students choose from a range of vocational and advanced-level courses and have opportunities to resit GCSE examinations. Teachers have high expectations of students. Students enjoy school, attend regularly and achieve well, particularly in specialist subjects. Last year all of the students gained places at university or went to work in industries linked to the school's specialisms. Students achieved better in advanced level English than they did in mathematics. A new leader of the sixth form with responsibility for improving this is beginning to lead improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe in school. Leaders carry out all necessary checks when recruiting new staff. Regular training ensures that staff know what to do if they have concerns. This year, a senior leader has taken responsibility for managing safeguarding. She has quickly recognised that although detailed records are kept, they need to be organised more systematically to enable staff to make regular checks of a small proportion of pupils who are taught off-site. Leaders are taking action to improve this. Staff promote the use of technology throughout the school. However, the risks attached to pupils and students having open access to the internet and social media have not been fully considered.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not promote pupils' healthy lifestyles and wider understanding as well as it could through physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. Leaders should review their provision for these subjects.
- Pupils do not achieve as highly in English, mathematics and science as they do in their specialist subjects. Leaders should continue to seek ways to improve outcomes in these core subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139416
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10110203
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roger Morris
Principal	Chris Mitchell
Website	http://www.elstreeutc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 May 2017

Information about this school

- Elstree UTC opened in 2013. It is sponsored by the University of Hertfordshire; other sponsors are the Meller Education Trust and Elstree Studios.
- The school is smaller than average.
- Pupils join the school in Year 10. They follow a core curriculum in English, mathematics and science and choose four options in a specialist creative curriculum. In the sixth form, students follow advanced level and vocational awards linked to the school's specialisms.
- The school uses the following alternative provision: The Links pupil referral unit, Hertfordshire; the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London; and the Education Support Team for Medical Absence, Hertfordshire.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors visited lessons with senior leaders to observe pupils and students at work. They carried out learning walks to observe behaviour and attitudes. They also walked around the school to gauge how effectively it promotes pupils and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and their safety.
- They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers, including newly-qualified staff, and the chair and four other members of the school's governing body. They also met with pupils and students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They scrutinised pupils and students' work. They looked at safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by school leaders.
- They considered 70 free-text responses sent by parents, 74 responses on Ofsted's online Parent View and questionnaires completed by 29 staff and 57 pupils and students.
- The following subjects were considered as part of this inspection: English, mathematics, science, production arts, production technology, and music performance.

Inspection team

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