

Inspection of Health Futures UTC

High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 8DJ

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Until recently, it was not clear that Health Futures UTC had a health focus. That has changed. Students attending the school are now in no doubt that the school's aim is to provide a career pathway into health-related industries. The reception area is flanked by mannequins dressed as paramedics and surgeons and banners promoting the care values of empowerment, confidentiality, dignity, safeguarding, respect, communication and anti-discrimination. All students in Years 10 and 11 now study for a qualification in health and social care.

Staff have higher expectations of students than they had previously. Students look smart in their uniforms. However, too many do not attend school regularly and are late. Students are compliant in lessons and act sensibly when they walk around the school. Yet, some do not have positive attitudes towards learning, and not all are happy in school. This has not been helped by the high number of staff who have left the school recently. Although the number of staff leaving has reduced, pupils told us that they did not like having so many supply teachers.

Some students who responded to the pupil survey reported incidents of bullying. But students are confident that this is picked up quickly and dealt with by staff.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have made it a priority to make sure that the school has a health and science focus. The curriculum is now more appropriate, with a range of health- and science-related courses. In key stage 4, all students study a core of English, mathematics, science and health and social care. English and health and social care are relative strengths. The curriculum in these subjects is sequenced in a logical way. This ensures that students build their knowledge over time.

Teachers make sensible decisions about the order in which they teach topics. For example, in English literature, students develop their analytical skills when studying 'A Christmas Carol'. They then sharpen these skills when studying more complex literature, such as 'Romeo and Juliet'. The curriculum is not as well sequenced elsewhere. In some subjects, including science and psychology, topics jump around in a muddled way.

Assessment is not used consistently well. Typically, teachers assess students against the criteria set out by examination boards. This is true for students in key stage 4 and those in the sixth form. Teachers do not always use assessment to check how well students have understood their work or to identify gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, misconceptions are not always corrected. Because teachers are focused on preparing students for examinations, some students have a superficial understanding of their work. We spoke to students in science who were able to answer questions by recounting facts but were unable to apply their learning to different contexts.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have focused on helping the highest-attaining students and disadvantaged students. They have had some success. These groups of students are now achieving better than they were. However, lower-attaining students are not achieving as well as they should. Some told us that they were not given the support they need and felt they were not treated as well as their peers.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. However, there is room for this to be even better. Currently, the system for identifying students with SEND is at an early stage of development. Leaders know what needs to be done and have plans in place to improve this system.

Students receive appropriate careers information, advice and guidance. Partners from within the health industry provide support and work experience opportunities. All the students we spoke to were positive about their health-related work experience. When students leave the sixth form, most move on to appropriate university courses. We did notice, however, that very few moved into apprenticeships.

Provision for students' wider development is not yet good enough. Students do not have many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, and there are limited opportunities for them to learn about different faiths and cultures. Some students currently miss part of their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. This is because they are taken out for extra English. Leaders are addressing this.

Students told us that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. We noted students behaving appropriately around the school, and most were compliant in lessons. However, some students do not show a strong desire to learn. Although attendance is improving, there are still too many students who are frequently absent from school. This is having a negative impact on their learning.

The governing body is committed to improving the school. Governors have lots of experience of health-related industries. They have developed a good relationship with representatives from the WMG Academy Multi-Academy Trust. The trust is providing helpful support to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there are clear procedures in place to keep students safe. Leaders carry out the necessary checks on new staff before they are appointed in order to ensure that they are suitable to work with students. Leaders provide all staff with safeguarding training as soon as they start, and this is refreshed regularly. Staff know the signs that may suggest a student is at risk of harm, and they know what to do if they are concerned. Leaders maintain thorough safeguarding records and work well with outside agencies. They ensure that students who need help get it quickly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Lessons are not sequenced consistently well in all subjects. For example, in science and psychology, topics are not taught in an order that allows students to build their knowledge and develop their skills incrementally. Leaders and teachers should ensure that lessons are sequenced consistently well in all subjects.
- Assessment is not used consistently well. Assessment is frequently used to check how well students are prepared for examinations rather than to check how well they have understood their work. Leaders and teachers should ensure that assessment is used to check how well students have understood their work and how well they can apply their knowledge.
- Lower-attaining students are not doing as well as they should. They do not always get the support that they need. Leaders should ensure that lower-attaining students receive the support that they need.
- Some students in Year 11 do not have enough PSHE education. This is because they are taken out of part of their PSHE education lessons for extra English. Moreover, there are limited opportunities for students to learn about different faiths and cultures. Leaders should ensure that all students have appropriate PSHE education, as well as opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures.
- Attendance has been lower than the national average for the past two years. Although there are some signs that it is improving, it is improving very slowly. Furthermore, there are still too many students who are persistently absent from school. This means that students are missing out on learning. Leaders should review their strategies to ensure that they are as effective as they can be to improve students' attendance.
- Leaders' system for identifying students with SEND is not fully developed. Consequently, there may be students with SEND who are not doing as well as they should because their needs are not known. Leaders should ensure that the system for identifying students with SEND is improved further so that all students with SEND receive the support that they need.

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 are the school and you are 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	141813
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10135617
Type of school	Technical
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	162
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	66
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michelle Shaw
Principal	Ruth Umerah (interim principal)
Website	www.healthfuturesutc.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Health Futures UTC is a university technical college with a focus on health and social sciences.
- There are a small number of students accessing alternative provision at Ascend health and childcare, Dartmouth House and Flexible Learning.
- The school is currently being supported by the WMG Academy for Young Engineers multi-academy trust. This support was brokered by the Department for Education (DfE) following the school's most recent section 5 inspection in May 2018.

Information about this inspection

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

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.

- We met with the interim principal and assistant principals. We also met with a range of staff, including curriculum leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. We met with members of the governing body and a representative from WMG Academy for Young Engineers multi-academy trust.
- We focused on English, science, psychology and health and social care during the inspection. We considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised students' work, as well as discussing with students how well they learn these subjects.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of meetings of the board of trustees and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- When inspecting safeguarding, we looked at the school's procedures for recruiting staff. We also considered the quality of staff training and the procedures that are in place to keep students safe.

Inspection team

Niall Gallagher, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

Victor Reid

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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