

Inspection of UTC Portsmouth

London Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 9DU

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are overwhelmingly proud to be part of this learning community. Their shared high aspirations drive the school's daily work. Consequently, pupils flourish. They develop strong subject knowledge that equips them very well for high-quality careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Equally, they learn to be active, responsible and thoughtful citizens.

Pupils conduct themselves impeccably. They are intrinsically motivated to do their best. They consistently demonstrate the school's STEM values, such as resilience, responsibility, communication and curiosity. The curriculum helps pupils to develop these attributes deliberately over time. Prospective employers and apprenticeship providers note how well these values prepare pupils for the workplace. These characteristics also help large numbers of pupils meet their aspirations to go to university.

UTC Portsmouth is a very supportive and inclusive place to be. Reports of bullying, racism or sexually harmful behaviours are extremely rare. As one pupil noted, 'We're non-judgemental about anyone – no-one is excluded here'. Parents reflect how their child's attitude to school has been transformed since coming to UTC Portsmouth. They rightly note the effective education and careful support that their children receive. Respectful relationships with adults enable pupils to thrive and become enthusiastic and highly motivated learners.

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

Senior leaders are highly reflective and effective. They have swiftly addressed the specific significant weakness identified at the last inspection. At the same time, they have improved other aspects of the school that were already good. Their ambition to provide the best possible education for pupils shines through all of their work.

The curriculum supports the school's STEM focus precisely. It stretches well beyond the examination subjects that pupils learn. Staff are experts in their fields, their knowledge often enhanced by experience of working in industry. Consequently, pupils understand the context of what they are learning, as well as the content. They gain secure and relevant knowledge across the subjects that they study. This leads them successfully towards high-quality destinations when they leave the school. High proportions of pupils secure places at university or on level 4 apprenticeships at the end of Year 13. No pupil leaves the school without further education, employment or training to go to.

Pupils' learning needs are clearly understood. Established routines help pupils and teachers to check how well subject content has been learned. Prompt and specific feedback enables knowledge gaps to be filled quickly. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is precise and appropriate.

A focus on the school's STEM values permeates through the rest of the school's work. Everything happens for a reason. Pupils engage routinely with employer partners from STEM-related businesses as part of their planned learning. During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, these interactions have been sustained and enhanced, not reduced or restricted. Leaders have seen remote learning as an opportunity for doing this work more efficiently. Pupils, therefore, develop a deep understanding both of the STEM careers and the attributes that prospective employers seek.

Pupils' learning extends well beyond the school's STEM focus. A compulsory enrichment programme ensures that all pupils experience activities that develop their wider cultural understanding. All of these experiences link back to the school's core values. This enables pupils to make deliberate choices about which activities will help them to develop their STEM values equally well. Well-planned personal, social, health education ensures that pupils learn about relevant and sensitive issues, including personal safety, relationships, sexual health and consent. Careers information, advice and guidance is impartial. This ensures that those pupils who decide that a STEM career is not for them are guided towards an appropriate and equally ambitious goal.

At the time of this inspection, pupils in Year 11 and 13 were not in school. Pupils made smooth transitions between on-site and remote learning during periods of local COVID-19 restrictions. This meant that little learning time was lost, and courses were completed as planned. Leaders remain in touch with pupils to check on their well-being during the extended post-assessment break.

Senior and middle leaders are astutely aware of their areas of responsibility. They approach improvement work intelligently. For instance, when considering how to develop the school's approach to literacy, they looked systematically at the needs of pupils, staff and parents. This led to specific staff training to help support pupils in interpreting the complex literature they might encounter when working with employer partners.

Trustees' work is similarly well focused and established. They are fully invested in the school's ethos and purpose. Strengthened routines ensure that they hold leaders successfully to account for the impact of their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and trustees have robustly addressed historic weaknesses in safeguarding. Beyond the systems and processes, they have successfully strengthened the school's safeguarding culture. Consequently, staff are vigilant and act quickly to keep pupils safe.

A focus on safeguarding is evident in every layer of the school's work. Leaders routinely check that staff knowledge is secure and that reporting systems are

working properly. They act swiftly and rigorously if concerns arise about a pupil, seeking specialist support when needed. Leaders sensibly work with safeguarding experts from beyond the school to further develop their knowledge and check the quality of their work.

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	143430
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10184678
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	403
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charles Parker
Principal	James Doherty
Website	www.utcportsmouth.org
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- UTC Portsmouth is a university technical college. It opened in September 2017. It provides education for pupils aged 14 to 19. Most pupils join the school in Year 10, with some enrolling at the start of Year 12.
- The curriculum is focused on STEM subjects. The school works closely with a number of employer partners to deliver the curriculum. These partners include Airbus, IBM, Portsmouth City Council, QinetiQ, the Royal Navy and the University of Portsmouth.
- The school is governed by the UTC Portsmouth Academy Trust. Representatives from some of the employer partners sit on the board of trustees. The current chair of trustees took up his role in January 2021.
- The principal took up his post shortly before the last time the school was inspected, having previously been the vice principal. The current vice principal was appointed in June 2020. One of the assistant principals took on the role of

designated safeguarding lead from September 2020. There has been some restructuring of middle leadership since the last inspection.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with a range of senior and middle leaders. They discussed leaders' work to improve the school since the last inspection and to provide a good quality of education. Along with leaders, they visited lessons in mathematics, science, engineering and computer science. They spoke to teachers and pupils from the lessons they visited and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements were scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks on adults working in the school. They considered training and systems for identifying and addressing concerns about pupils' welfare. They talked to pupils about how they learn to keep themselves safe, meeting boys and girls separately.
- Inspectors gathered other relevant evidence about the quality of provision in the school. This included information about pupils' attendance and behaviour and the school's work to support pupils' personal development. Pupils' destinations on leaving the school were considered. The lead inspector spoke to five representatives of the board of trustees, two of whom participated via video call.
- Inspectors took account of stakeholder views via 71 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire since September 2020, including 14 submitted during the inspection. They also considered 30 free-text comments provided by parents and 28 responses to the staff survey.
- Pupils in Year 11 and 13 were not in school at the time of the inspection, which took place after the formal date on which Year 11 are permitted to leave. Pupils attended school until 18 June, in order to complete relevant assessments.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Clive Close	Her Majesty's Inspector

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