

# Inspection of University Technical College Leeds

2 Sayner Road, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 1LA

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders and staff are united in their vision to develop the next generation of engineers, scientists and innovators. This vision is realised at this inclusive school. Pupils are well supported by kind staff who are determined to help them to achieve highly. The school supports students in the sixth form to progress to a range of highly ambitious next steps, including apprenticeship opportunities and higher education at university.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Staff create a calm and purposeful atmosphere, both in lessons and around the school. Bullying is vanishingly rare. Pupils display a tangible and emerging professionalism as they grow in confidence and self-belief. They are confident to bring any concerns that they have to members of staff. Pupils know they will be helped with any worries that they may have.

Leaders provide many broad opportunities for pupils to learn about different careers. Pupils work closely with employers on different projects, closely linked with each subject area. The curriculum is brought to life as a result. Pupils of all ages gain significant opportunities to learn about the world of work and make highly informed choices about their next steps.

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

Leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to gain in each subject that they study. Teachers skilfully weave in opportunities to demonstrate how this knowledge links to the world of work. This brings subjects to life for pupils. Sponsors and employers play an active role in defining this knowledge and providing the workplace projects that play such an important role in driving the ambition that builds in pupils over time. Pupils develop important workplace skills and start networking and building relationships with future employers. All of this contributes to the success that is seen in the sixth form as students complete their studies, ready for ambitious next steps.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and think carefully about how best to help pupils understand new information. Teachers highlight where there are links to what pupils have learned in other subjects. As a result, pupils quickly build new knowledge and remember it over time. Pupils value the 'retrieval starters' that teachers regularly use to check where there may be gaps in their knowledge. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, say that this helps them to remember what they have been taught before.

Staff know all pupils well. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same ambitious curriculum alongside their peers. Teachers ensure that all pupils receive the support that they need. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, develop their independence, become increasingly confident and are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders have rightly recognised the importance of ensuring that all pupils can read fluently. Those pupils who need support to become more proficient readers are quickly identified when they start at the UTC. Specialist English teachers deliver a tailored programme of support. As a result, the majority of these pupils make rapid progress in reading more fluently. Leaders have arranged further training for staff to strengthen this provision.

For some pupils, their previous experience of education has not been positive. For many, attending this school is a fresh start at something new and something different. Some pupils live at a significant distance from the UTC. Despite recent train strikes resulting in longer journey times for some pupils, the great majority of pupils attend well. This is because of the value in which they hold their education here and their relationships with staff. Pupils know that they are genuinely cared about. Leaders do everything possible to help those few pupils who struggle with attending school or with meeting leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Leaders' actions ensure that, over time, these pupils are supported to make better choices.

There are many opportunities for pupils to engage with the world of work and to learn about the variety of careers that are available to them. This fuels their aspirations. Sixth-form students appreciate the careers advice that they receive. They are excited for their next steps, while recognising the importance of gaining their qualifications first. Leaders have recognised that pupils do not currently have a strong enough knowledge of different faiths and non-faith world views, as well as some other aspects of the 'values' curriculum. Leaders have taken recent steps to strengthen this curriculum, so that pupils are even better prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors know this school well. They play an important part in ensuring that the uniqueness of what it offers pupils and the community continues to strengthen. Governors hold leaders to account and check carefully that decisions taken are in the best interests of pupils. Leaders, including governors, consider the workload and well-being of staff. A member of staff told an inspector, 'Everyone is happy here; we are all part of one team'. Many other staff gave similar comments.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff, including governors, receive regular safeguarding training and important updates on safeguarding issues. As a result, staff know the signs that suggest a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report concerns over pupils' welfare promptly and leaders swiftly follow these up. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from harm. Leaders check that those who travel a long distance to and from school have the knowledge and strategies to minimise any risks that they may face.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not have a sufficiently strong knowledge of different religions and non-faith world views. This is because the 'values' curriculum has not provided them with sufficient opportunities to learn this and other important knowledge from this curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the improvements made to the 'values' curriculum enable all pupils to learn the knowledge that leaders have highlighted, so that they are even better prepared for life in modern Britain.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142604
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255733
<b>Type of school</b>	Technical
<b>School category</b>	University technical college
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	428
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Tim Craven
<b>Principal</b>	Hannah Wilson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.utcleeds.co.uk">www.utcleeds.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 and 27 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, new leaders have been appointed. The current principal, who is seconded from Rodillian Multi Academy Trust, took up post in January 2020.
- Governance is overseen by the UTC Leeds board of trustees.
- The school is funded by the Department for Education. It has industry partners, including 4B Group; Arla; CAE; Engineering UK; Mpac Lambert, MPM, National Physical Laboratory; Northern Gas Networks; OPM Group; Royal Air Force; Siemens UK; Smart Buildings; Sound Leisure; Stantec; Unilever; West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce; Kirkstall Precision Engineering and Caddick Construction.
- The key stage 4 curriculum consists of 'core' subjects, including mathematics, English, science, engineering design and engineering manufacture. The

curriculum also provides 'optional' subjects, including computer science, geography, and art and design.

- The key stage 5 curriculum consists of A-level mathematics for most students, engineering and science qualifications, including academic and technical qualifications. Students can also study other A levels and an extended project qualification.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior school leaders and representatives of the trust board, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, careers and sixth form. Inspectors spoke with teachers at the early stages of their teaching career.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science and engineering. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about wider curriculum subjects and reading. An inspector listened to pupils read. Inspectors visited lessons in wider subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation and policies. They carefully checked the systems in place to keep pupils safe.
- The views of parents were considered through the responses to Ofsted's parent survey. The views of pupils were considered through responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, as well as through meetings held with pupils.
- The views of staff were considered through meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Powell

Ofsted Inspector

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