

Inspection of AldridgeUTC@MediaCityUK

100-102 Broadway, Salford, Greater Manchester M50 2UW

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, choose to join this school to experience a specialist, technical curriculum. They told inspectors that they feel happy and well supported. Many pupils said that they had begun to thrive since joining the school.

Leaders set high expectations for all pupils' learning and behaviour. There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils behave professionally in all that they do. Most pupils embrace this approach. They said that behaviour has improved considerably in recent years. They behave with respect and maturity, both in school and when working with employer partners. Most pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning. They achieve well in their academic and technical subjects.

Pupils respect difference and diversity among their peers. They are confident that adults will help and support them if they have worries or concerns. Leaders deal effectively with incidents of bullying or discrimination. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities that leaders provide for them to nurture and develop their specific interests and skills in the media industry. They have regular exposure to industry experts through well-thought-out assemblies, workshops and work placements. Pupils have opportunities to engage in real-life projects and productions. These help pupils to develop their technical and creative skills as part of, and in addition to, their curriculum.

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

Leaders, governors and trustees are ambitious for all pupils in this school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have thought carefully about the overarching curriculum design. In recent years, they have transformed the quality of education that pupils receive. This includes students in the sixth form. Specialist vocational qualifications and GCSEs are suitably built around an academic core for all pupils. Leaders have worked with employer partners to ensure that these qualifications provide pupils, and students in the sixth form, with a broad base of subject knowledge, as well as specialist skills and experiences.

All subjects in key stage 4 and key stage 5 are delivered by qualified teachers, many of whom also have specialist industry-specific experience. They have strong subject knowledge. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and be able to do. This knowledge is well ordered so that pupils can build on their prior learning and make links between subjects.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. Pupils join the school with a wide range of different starting points and backgrounds. Subject leaders and teachers use leaders' assessment strategies well to identify and address effectively any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions that pupils may have.

Leaders prioritise reading. Reading is promoted through tutor-time reading activities, rewards and the explicit teaching of technical vocabulary. Leaders have systems in place to identify those pupils who join the school with gaps in their reading knowledge. Some extra support is provided for these pupils. However, this strategy is not developed well enough to provide the specific help and knowledge that some pupils need to catch up quickly and to read fluently.

Staff receive helpful information about the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders provide training and support for staff to identify and understand these pupils' additional needs. As a result, teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum and reduce barriers to learning for pupils with SEND. This helps these pupils to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and achieve well.

Leaders have implemented clear behaviour systems and routines. They encourage pupils, and students in the sixth form, to behave like they are professionals in the work environment. Most pupils rise to meet these high standards. The atmosphere around the school is calm and orderly. Disruptions in lessons are rare. Leaders provide effective support for the minority of pupils who sometimes struggle to regulate their own behaviour in this environment.

A few pupils who join the school have a record of low attendance. Leaders have some effective systems in place to support these pupils and can demonstrate an overall improved attendance rate following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some pupils are still regularly absent from school. This prevents them from accessing the curriculum as fully as they could. Leaders are in the process of refining their strategies to support these pupils.

An effective programme of wider personal development is implemented across the school for all pupils. It includes visiting speakers and experts, as well as work-related learning. This provides a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to develop their character, to learn about British values, and to understand the issues related to their emotional health and well-being. Staff support students to become independent learners through the well-designed sixth-form study programmes.

Employer engagement opportunities, as well as a suitable careers programme, prepare all pupils and students for the choices that they will make for their future education, training or employment. Pupils and students progress on to positive next steps when they leave the school.

Governors and trustees know the local and specialist context of the school well. They offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Leaders are rigorous in their approach to self-evaluation. This is helping to secure ongoing improvements to the quality of education for all pupils. Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders give to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create a strong culture of safeguarding. They are aware of the local contextual risks for pupils at the school. Leaders provide regular safeguarding training for staff and governors. Strong transition arrangements help staff to get to know pupils' individual circumstances.

Leaders provide effective pastoral support for pupils. They work closely with families to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need. This includes working with external agencies, when appropriate.

The curriculum, including that in the sixth form, is designed to raise awareness of safeguarding risks. This includes online safety, knife crime and age-appropriate sex and relationships advice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Several pupils who join the school with persistently low attendance still do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they do not benefit from all that the curriculum has to offer. Leaders should ensure that they further develop their strategies to reduce pupils' rates of absence, particularly those pupils who are persistently absent.
- The support that leaders provide for pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge is underdeveloped. This means that a small number of pupils do not receive the help that they need to read fluently. Leaders should improve the support that they provide for these pupils. This is so that they can catch up quickly with their reading, in line with their peers.

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

Unique reference number	146303
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10244618
Type of school	Technical
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	338
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rob Wye
Principal	Colin Grand
Website	www.utcmmediacityuk.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- AldridgeUTC@MediaCityUK is a university technical college. It provides education for pupils aged 14 to 18. Most pupils join the school in Year 10, with some enrolling at the start of Year 12.
- The school joined the Aldridge Education Trust in September 2018.
- The curriculum is specialised in the creative and technical digital industry. Leaders work closely with several employer partners to deliver the curriculum. These partners include: The BBC, ITV, Quayside, The Lowry and Salford University.
- The current principal took up post in 2021. He is also the principal for another school in the Aldridge Education Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and

engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing committee and representatives of the Aldridge Education Trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector gathered the views of a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, film and TV, digital design and game design. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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. An inspector also spoke with the subject leader for science about the curriculum in science and visited a sample of lessons.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector also met with some parents during the inspection to gather their views.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff to discuss the support that they receive from leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with some pupils about school life. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils at social times.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents about safeguarding and spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. An inspector checked the arrangements for any pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

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