

Inspection of Shireland Biomedical UTC

350 High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 8DJ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

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

The principal of this UTC is Andrea Stephens. This UTC is part of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the UTC. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Mark Grundy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Dennis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff and parents agree that there have been improvements in Shireland Biomedical University Technical College (UTC) since it transferred to a trust. Pupils in key stage 3 are happy and appreciate that behaviour routines are now well embedded, which means that the UTC is calm and orderly.

Leaders have worked effectively to ensure that the UTC's physical organisation works well for all pupils, including opportunities for outdoor play and physical education. In the sixth form, students state that they are benefiting from the closer links with Birmingham City University, especially those which embed the UTC's biomedical mission.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. However, there remains variability across the curriculum as to how well these expectations are realised. In the sixth form, there are more consistently high standards, whereas in Years 7 and 8 there remains inconsistency in some areas of the curriculum. The personal development curriculum remains underdeveloped too, including the range of opportunities offered to pupils as well as the uptake.

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

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum at Shireland Biomedical UTC. Pupils in key stage 3 now benefit from a cross-curricular key stage 3 'literacy4life' curriculum. This is an ambitious curriculum, where pupils' knowledge is mapped across a range of subjects. In some examples seen, pupils of all abilities have learned the key knowledge across a range of subjects. However, leaders acknowledge that they have not had time to give sufficient training to all teachers to deliver 'literacy4life' across the curriculum to meet individual pupils' needs effectively.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified accurately. On occasion, adaptations for them are too variable, which can mean they do not always achieve well.

Leaders are aware that pupils have variable reading ages on entry to the UTC. They do not yet have a fully developed approach to teaching reading skills for pupils with weaker reading skills. This means that some pupils with weaker reading skills struggle to access the curriculum.

In the sixth form, there is more consistency around the delivery of the ambitious curriculum. Applied courses are a particular strength of the UTC. Students on these courses are well supported to achieve well thanks to clear identification of the key knowledge they need to learn, and good use of assessment to check that all students have understood the learning. Students receive suitable careers information and are supported well with applications for post-18 destinations. High proportions of pupils apply successfully for university. Leaders are working on enhancing the offer and uptake for the wider key stage 5 curriculum. Students in the

sixth form have benefited from the close links established with Birmingham City University, especially in the sciences.

The UTC has clarified its expectations for behaviour, and new systems have been introduced to support pupils. These have had a positive impact, as pupils are well-mannered, and there is a calm atmosphere in the UTC. The UTC works effectively with pupils who need support to meet its expectations. Attendance is high as leaders have been systematic in their approach to tackling poor attendance, and have successfully built relationships with families to ensure pupils are supported to attend the UTC regularly.

The UTC has introduced a trust policy for pupils' personal development. This includes work on pupils' personal, social, health and economic education as well as teaching them about respectful relationships. Leaders acknowledge there remains work to do to embed this curriculum fully. There are a range of extra-curricular opportunities available, but leaders do not have clear oversight on the uptake of these opportunities. Pupils would like to expand the offer available to them. A student council has just been set up, but has yet to make a tangible difference to the operation of the UTC. The advice pupils receive about the workplace and future destinations is effective, and draws appropriately on the UTC's healthcare specialism.

Leaders have worked extensively to improve all aspects of the UTC. This has included admitting pupils to Year 7 and developing a productive relationship with a new university partner in line with the UTC's healthcare speciality. Trustees and members of the standards and performance committee are very well informed about decisions taken to improve the quality of education in the UTC. They discharge their legal responsibilities well, and consider staff's workload in all they do. Given the changes to staffing at all levels, the UTC has still to ensure that all leaders have a fully developed understanding of their roles and how to quality assure their areas of responsibility. Early career teachers and teaching staff are well supported through a broad professional development offer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have sufficient pedagogical content knowledge to deliver the curriculum, often because they have just started at the UTC. This means they do not teach some subjects in the cross-curricular 'literacy4life' curriculum as leaders intend. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers have sufficient training on pedagogical content knowledge to be able to deliver the 'literacy4life' curriculum effectively across all subjects.

- Some learning activities are not adapted sufficiently for pupils' prior understanding. This often includes pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils struggle to engage with tasks set, and others find them too easy. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers have training to adapt their teaching to take into account pupils' prior understanding, including pupils with SEND.
- Leaders do not consistently check how effectively improvements have been embedded in their areas of responsibility. As a result, trust leaders often have to support leaders in the UTC to ensure there is consistent application of agreed policies. Trust leaders need to ensure that leaders at all levels know how to monitor the impact of their work, so that there is increased consistency in all aspects of the UTC.
- The UTC's work on pupils' personal development is at an early stage. This means there are inconsistencies in the delivery of the agreed curriculum, and leaders are not clear on the uptake of the limited range of extra-curricular opportunities. The UTC needs to ensure that its plans for pupils' personal development are implemented consistently.
- Leaders have yet to implement their plans to support pupils with weaker reading skills. This means that some pupils are having difficulties in accessing the curriculum. Leaders should accelerate the support for weaker readers, to ensure that all pupils can read fluently to enable them to access the curriculum appropriately.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141813
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10290617
Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	83
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Dennis
CEO of the trust	Sir Mark Grundy
Principal	Andrea Stephens
Website	sbmutc.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a university technical college. It provides technical education for pupils aged 11 to 19.
- The UTC's major partner is the Birmingham City University.
- The principal was appointed in September 2023.
- The UTC transferred to Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust in April 2022.
- The UTC changed its admissions policy to take Year 7 pupils from September 2022.
- At the time of inspection, there were Year 7, Year 8, Year 12 and Year 13 pupils in the UTC.
- The UTC does not use any alternative provision.

- The UTC meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a UTC's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the UTC received since the COVID-19 pandemic began, and the first inspection since the UTC joined Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the UTC and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the UTC.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the UTC has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- As a part of this inspection, inspectors met with the trust's CEO, trust representatives, a trustee, governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff and other employees in the UTC. They also scrutinised trustees' minutes.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: mathematics, science, geography and health and social care. They also looked at examples of pupils' work in other subjects. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the UTC's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the UTC's behaviour and attendance records with UTC leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to staff and pupil surveys, and Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Reeves	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Beech	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2023