

# Inspection of University Collegiate School

Deane Road, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL3 5AG

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is James Inman. This school is part of Quest multi-academy trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Marc Doyle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Crispin Pailing.

When University Collegiate School was inspected in December 2022, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on two occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders were judged to have made progress to improve the school, but more work was necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

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

This school has undergone a transformation since the 2022 inspection. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are delighted with the improvements that the school has made. They feel happier, safer and more able to learn at school.

The trust has supported the school to set the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils have risen to this challenge admirably. They behave well and are beginning to achieve more highly than in the past.

The University Collegiate School's values of responsibility, loyalty and professionalism permeate the school. Pupils interact with staff and their peers with genuine warmth. Politeness and mutual respect are commonplace. Students in the sixth form carry these values beyond the school when they embark on work-based projects and professional placements.

Pupils benefit from the unique opportunities for vocational learning that the school provides. For example, they complete science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) projects with local employers. Students in the sixth form access industry-standard resources to support their studies in engineering and the health sciences. Pupils are regular visitors to the neighbouring university. These opportunities, alongside a comprehensive careers programme, set pupils up well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

Support from the trust, and the interim advisory board (IAB), has enhanced the leadership at all levels of this school. The close partnership between trustees and the IAB has been instrumental in bringing about much-needed change at a rapid pace. In a short space of time, the school has successfully addressed its previous areas of weakness.

Staff have embraced trustees' vision to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. The school is well on the way to realising that vision. This has been aided by the school's strong emphasis on professional development. Staff value the support that they receive. Although their workload can be high at times, staff appreciate how the school considers their well-being.

The school has overhauled its curriculum to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a broad range of subjects. Specialist options in key stages 4 and 5 provide pupils with routes to ambitious further and higher education destinations. This has helped the school to regain some of the distinctiveness that befits a university technical college.

Weaknesses in the previous curriculum had a negative impact on the published GCSE results for pupils in 2023. This cohort of pupils were also admitted before the school's key stage 3 provision began. This means that they spent only two years at the school before sitting their examinations. Pupils currently in the school are learning and progressing

through the new curriculum well. The school is alert to the large gaps that some older pupils have in their learning and has begun making strides towards addressing these. However, despite this, these gaps remain a barrier to some pupils' achievement.

Subject curriculums are well organised. They set out exactly what pupils should learn and in what order. Typically, these curriculums are delivered well by staff who know their subjects in depth. Most staff explain new ideas clearly and check whether pupils have grasped them before moving on. However, despite the clarity of the curriculum, some staff do not deliver learning as effectively as they should. At times, the approaches that they choose are not well matched to the knowledge that pupils need to acquire. This makes it harder for some pupils to build their knowledge step by step in these subjects.

The school recognises the contribution that reading makes to pupils' achievement. Pupils who struggle with reading receive effective support. This is helping them to catch up with their peers.

The school has systems for identifying any additional needs that pupils may have. Staff are provided with detailed information about these needs. They are beginning to use this information to help them adapt their delivery of the curriculum. Support from the school is helping pupils with SEND to access appropriately ambitious next steps in their education.

In the main, pupils' conduct is purposeful and calm. They understand how to live up to the school's values. The school ensures that any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively so that learning is not disrupted. The school is also working successfully with the families of pupils who are often absent from school. Some pupils' rates of attendance are increasing as a result.

The school has introduced a wide-ranging programme to support pupils' personal development. Some parts of this programme, such as the careers guidance and character education that pupils receive, are of high quality. Other parts have been developed more recently. This includes the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school has improved this curriculum. However, on occasions, it is not delivered as well as it should be. Some pupils have difficulty remembering this important learning. They are not as well prepared for their lives beyond school as they should be.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, staff lack expertise to design learning and select activities which help pupils to build their knowledge securely. This hinders some pupils from learning the curriculum as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff receive

appropriate subject-specific guidance to support them to deliver the curriculum consistently well.

- The progress that older pupils make through the curriculum is hindered by the weaker curriculum that they experienced in the past. Many pupils have large gaps in their learning as a result. This means that their attainment by the end of key stage 4 is uneven. The school should strengthen its efforts to identify and address any missed learning so that these pupils achieve all that they should.
- Some pupils do not experience the high-quality PSHE education that the school intends. This is because some of the staff responsible for teaching this curriculum do not have the expertise that they need. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for their lives beyond school as others. The school should ensure that staff receive effective training which equips them to teach the PSHE curriculum as effectively as other subjects.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141941
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10318240
<b>Type of school</b>	University technical college
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 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>	542
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	64
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Crispin Pailing
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Marc Doyle
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Inman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theucs.org.uk">www.theucs.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 July 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- This school was formerly known as Bolton UTC. The school changed its name to University Collegiate School in September 2020.
- The school is part of Quest multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023. Since then, a large number of new staff have also been appointed.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.
- The school 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 inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and the chair of the IAB. He also met with the CEO of the trust.
- The lead inspector held an online meeting with representatives of the local authority. He also spoke with several of the school's other external partners.
- Inspectors looked in depth at the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors met with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and students about their experiences of school life.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, leaders' improvement plans, minutes of trust board meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Ben Hill, lead inspector

Sharon Asquith

Julie Yarwood

Lindy Griffiths

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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