

# Inspection of UTC Warrington

Dallam Lane, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 7NG

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Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

UTC Warrington has an inclusive culture that successfully nurtures pupils' unique talents and abilities. Many pupils have experienced personal trauma or had disrupted education before joining this school. Staff develop trusting relationships with pupils. This helps to build pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are happy at the school and feel safe.

Sixth-form students act as strong role models for younger pupils. Many pupils in key stage 4 behave well in lessons and in the dining hall. However, some pupils do not show positive attitudes in lessons, and occasionally, some pupils do not behave well when moving around the school.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of activities, including robotics club, 3D printing and combined cadet force. Overseas trips extend pupils' learning. The school has forged strong partnerships with prestigious employers to help pupils and students to be 'work ready'.

The school has high expectations of what pupils should learn. In the main, curriculum subjects are well designed across the school. However, there are some weaknesses in the design and implementation of the curriculum in key stage 4. As a result, some pupils learn better in some subjects than in others. Students in the sixth form, however, do benefit from a better-designed curriculum and achieve well.

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

UTC Warrington has developed an ambitious curriculum that helps meet the needs of local and regional employers. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding when they start in Year 10. The school helps them to develop educationally and supports their social and emotional well-being.

The school is in the process of refining the content of some curriculum subjects. In many subjects, the school has identified the knowledge pupils must learn and when they should learn this content. Consequently, pupils learn well in these subjects. However, in some subjects, the school is finalising what it wants pupils to know and the order in which this new learning should be taught. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

Many staff are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. The school has implemented a variety of strategies aimed at developing teachers' classroom practice. However, at times, teaching is not adapted to support pupils' learning, including for pupils with SEND. In addition, some staff do not use assessment strategies consistently well to check what pupils know or to identify errors and misconceptions. At times, this hinders some aspects of pupils' achievement.

Reading remains a priority for the school. The school has appropriate systems in place to check which pupils in Year 10 are behind with their reading. The school supports pupils

who find reading difficult to catch up. This helps them to develop confidence in reading.

The needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly. The school shares this information with staff. However, some staff use this information better than others. As a result, some pupils with SEND in key stage 4 do not progress as well as they should through the curriculum.

The quality of education in the sixth form is stronger than in key stage 4. Typically, staff use their secure subject knowledge to explain new concepts clearly. Students have many opportunities to revisit prior learning. This helps students, including those with SEND, to achieve well.

Many pupils who enter Year 10 in UTC Warrington have previously developed poor attitudes towards their education and had low attendance when they joined this school. The school is working with pupils and their families to remove barriers to learning. It has raised expectations of behaviour and introduced new behaviour and attendance strategies and rewards. These are having a positive effect on encouraging many pupils to behave well and improve their rates of attendance. However, some pupils still do not attend school regularly enough. This has a negative impact on their achievement.

Pupils and students learn about healthy relationships and managing risks. They show respect towards people of other races and religions. Pupils and students receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. Speakers from local businesses give regular presentations to pupils and students. This helps them to have a clear understanding of their next steps. All students in Year 13 move on to education, employment and training, including apprenticeships.

Staff feel that the school considers their well-being. The school is aware of the pressures on staff workload, for example the introduction of new vocational subjects in the sixth form, and is focused on alleviating these. Trustees provide an equal balance of support and challenge to secure improvements in the school's provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not finalised the curriculum in some subjects. It has not defined all of the subject knowledge pupils need to learn. This hinders some pupils from learning as well as they should. The school should identify the important knowledge and skills pupils should learn in these subjects.
- At times, some staff do not consistently apply the school's agreed learning techniques and checks on learning. This makes it harder for pupils, including those with SEND, to

improve their knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum and check pupils' learning so pupils know and remember more over time.

- Some pupils do not demonstrate positive attitudes towards their education. Some of these pupils' behaviour falls short of the school's high expectations while others do not attend as regularly as they should. This hinders how well these pupils achieve. The school should build on the effective strategies they have put in place to remove barriers to pupils.

## 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>	142899
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348334
<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>	293
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	113
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mike Houghton
<b>Principal</b>	Christopher Hatherall
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.utcw.co.uk">www.utcw.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school's curriculum focuses heavily, but not exclusively, on science, technology and engineering.
- The school is a stand-alone academy. Members of the trust board also serve as governors.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes to leadership and staffing. The current principal was appointed in September 2021.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions 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

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, vice-principal and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the trust. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and with employers. An inspector spoke with representatives of alternative provisions that the school uses.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences in school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, engineering and digital support services. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Hammersley

Ofsted Inspector

Sue Farrimond

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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