

# Inspection of UTC Sheffield City Centre

111 Matilda Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 4QF

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Inspection dates:	23 and 24 April 2025
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	Good

The principal of this school is Alex Reynolds. This school is part of the Sheffield UTC Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Nick Crew, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Javid Mahdavi.

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

The ambitious, specialist curriculum on offer at the UTC helps prepare pupils well for the workplace. Pupils benefit from industry-standard equipment, the knowledge of staff and dedicated careers advice. Pupils are inspired by their engagements with employers. These include national and international businesses. Direct partnerships between these businesses and the UTC enhance pupils' educational experience and employability skills.

Students in the sixth form are role models for their younger peers. Expectations at the UTC are high for both pupils' achievement and attitude to learning. Most pupils meet these expectations and achieve well. Some pupils who previously struggled to engage in their education now thrive. Many pupils who spoke to inspectors commented on how well staff support them. Pastoral care is of a high quality. Pupils feel safe and trust staff to help them when they need it.

Enrichment opportunities at the UTC are vast. These include an environmental racing challenge and a space race engineering programme. Pupils engage with these regularly and benefit from the skills and knowledge they develop. Pupils learn to communicate confidently as part of the curriculum and during mock job interviews. Students in the sixth form have ambitious career goals and are well prepared for the workplace.

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

The curriculum that pupils follow at the UTC has been carefully considered. For example, pupils in Year 9 study an engineering foundation course to prepare them for more advanced learning in systems control or engineering manufacture. Students in the sixth form study a blended academic and technical curriculum, which prepares them well for their futures.

The school is continually reviewing what is taught and when. Younger pupils are developing a stronger understanding of what they have been taught over time. Students in the sixth form master increasingly complex, technical aspects of the curriculum well.

Staff identify what pupils know and can do. Additional support for those who have gaps in their understanding is in place. However, the school's quality assurance processes are not as effective as they might be at identifying why these gaps have developed in the first place. Some pupils' understanding of what they have been taught is underdeveloped, and this limits how well some pupils and students in the sixth form achieve, including in certain qualifications.

Improving pupils' literacy and encouraging them to read for pleasure are priorities across the school. Help for pupils at an early stage of learning to read is in place. The school accurately identify the interventions that will most benefit pupils. Those who require such support quickly catch up to their peers. Students in the sixth form, particularly, have a strong grasp of the technical vocabulary related to the specialist focus of the UTC.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are understood well at the

school. Leaders have ensured that high-quality provision for pupils with SEND is a priority. As a result, most pupils with SEND get the help they need in lessons. The achievement and attendance of pupils with SEND have improved of late.

The school has been successful at reducing suspensions, removals from lessons and rates of absence over time. Some groups of pupils now attend much better than their peers nationally. When this is not the case, the school takes action to address it. More work remains to be done to ensure improvements are sustained and attendance is as high as it might be for all groups of pupils, including sixth-form students.

Careers advice and guidance is of a high quality. Younger pupils just starting at the school and older students in the sixth form benefit from support when making choices about their futures. Many students in the sixth form successfully secure employment or study courses directly linked to the UTC's specialisms.

The school has designed a personal development programme which is intended to teach pupils about important aspects of life beyond education. This includes a range of faiths, cultures and government functions, as well as how to stay healthy. However, some pupils have not developed a strong understanding of the important information it contains. The school has not accurately identified where pupils lack understanding or why gaps have developed. This limits how well pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.

The well-being of staff and pupils is a high priority for leaders at all levels. Staff are dedicated to the vision and ethos of the UTC. Governors are similarly committed and knowledgeable. Many represent local businesses and industries. They support and challenge the school to provide pupils with the best start possible to their careers through education. Further refinement to the school's monitoring and evaluation processes is required to ensure that plans for future improvements are as precise and effective as possible.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Pupils', including students in the sixth form, understanding of the taught personal development curriculum is underdeveloped. This impacts how well prepared some pupils are to contribute to modern British society. The school should ensure that the personal development programme is implemented effectively and that students retain the important knowledge it contains.
- The school's systems for monitoring its own effectiveness are not precise or consistent enough. This limits how effectively some school improvement priorities are identified and addressed. The school should further refine its quality assurance processes so they

provide the specific information required to bring about school improvement in identified areas.

## **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>	139695
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379383
<b>Type of school</b>	Technical
<b>School category</b>	University technical college
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 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>	536
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Javid Mahdavi
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Nick Crew
<b>Principal</b>	Alex Reynolds
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.utcsheffield.org.uk">www.utcsheffield.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school is a university technical college. It provides technical education for pupils aged 13 to 19.
- The school opened in September 2013 and is part of the Sheffield UTC Academy Trust.
- The school uses two alternative provisions. One of these is not registered with the Department for Education.

## Information about this inspection

The 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.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the local governing body. The lead inspector met with the CEO.
- Inspectors met with representatives from partner organisations, including those who form part of the local governing board.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, science, creative digital media (including art, media and photography) and engineering (including design technology). Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the mathematics curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. They examined the school's behaviour and attendance records. They spoke to pupils about conduct and expectations at the school.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons.
- 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 responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

## **Inspection team**

John Linkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Clare

His Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Belfield

His Majesty's Inspector

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