

UTC Swindon

Bristol Street, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 5ET

Inspection dates

25–26 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Senior leaders and governors have not dealt effectively with the significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- Study programmes for the 16 to 19 provision are inadequate.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics is inadequate.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 and for many 16–19-year-old students in engineering, a core subject in the UTC, is inadequate.
- Pupils' progress in science in Years 10 and 11 is weak.
- Teachers take insufficient account of what pupils already know, understand and can do when planning their teaching.
- The feedback pupils receive in mathematics, science and engineering does not enable them to understand how well they are doing or how to improve their work.
- Too many pupils do not make enough progress. For example, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils are not given work that would enable them to make strong progress.
- The engineering-based curriculum does not meet pupils' needs well.
- Leaders make insufficient use of the wide range of engineering-based industrial partners to provide relevance to the curriculum.
- The development of students' wider employability skills in the 16 to 19 provision is not adequately monitored.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the site.
- Pupils are well looked after, including the high proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- When they are given the opportunity, pupils use the extensive range of specialist equipment confidently and safely. The positive difference in pupils' attitude to learning in practical sessions is palpable.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders must ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improves rapidly, particularly in mathematics and engineering, to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - establish and build on what pupils already know, understand and can do and use this to set higher levels of challenge
 - take careful account of the range of prior achievement and current progress in the groups they teach
 - provide pupils with feedback that helps them to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work
 - make sure that pupils know what they are doing and what is expected of them
 - structure learning so that pupils acquire the skills and understanding and make the progress they are capable of
 - review pupils' progress carefully and raising expectations accordingly.
- Senior leaders and governors must ensure that the curriculum:
 - meets the needs and aspirations of pupils
 - enables pupils to achieve well regardless of background, ability or starting point
 - meets the core principles that UTC was set up to achieve, including practical project-based learning
 - makes more effective use of the wide range of industrial partners.
- Senior leaders must work with industrial and other partners to develop a clear framework of employability skills. They must ensure that pupils develop these skills throughout the school, matched well to their personal ambitions, and monitor their progress carefully.

An external review of governance and of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Senior leaders and governors have not improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise pupils' achievement to adequate levels. This has not been helped by changes in senior leadership, difficulties in recruiting good teachers, and very low pupil numbers leading to significant financial constraints.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils, and contributes to their underachievement. The specialist focus on engineering is not being delivered adequately and many pupils make poor progress on these courses. The curriculum is not enhanced through the UTC's wide range of engineering partners. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have limited opportunities to develop linguistic skills and only a small number follow a humanities course.
- The acting principal and assistant principal do not have the capacity to lead teaching across the curriculum well enough. They are now supported for two days each week by the principal of an outstanding UTC, who is a national leader of education. The four subject leaders also have limited capacity to enable them to work with other teachers to share the few examples of good practice.
- Senior leaders are mostly aware of what needs to improve. However, they lack the expertise in engineering required to drive the rapid improvements needed on these courses.
- There are, in principle, suitable arrangements for managing the performance of teachers. Weaker teachers are initially supported prior to formal procedures being used when necessary. However, these arrangements have not led to the required improvements in teaching. The procedures help to identify the specific training needs of staff, but the lack of sufficient expertise makes it difficult to meet them.
- Pupils take part in a range of physical education activities at the local leisure centre. The UTC does not offer any additional creative or cultural activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development takes place within the personal, social and health education programme and through events spread across the year. This prepares them for life in modern Britain. They show an understanding of the need to value diversity and promote equality of opportunity.
- Despite weaknesses in teaching and many pupils not achieving as well as they should, there is a very positive atmosphere around the UTC. Many pupils value the second chance they have been given. They appreciate the more 'work like' atmosphere and more 'grown up' feel to the buildings and workshops and the way staff treat them. They mostly try to respond well. Many improve their attendance.
- It is strongly recommended that the UTC does not seek to recruit newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors know where the UTC needs to improve but they have not challenged senior leaders robustly enough to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Governors are supportive of senior leaders and other school leaders. There is now a good breadth and depth of expertise in the governing body to enable them to provide greater challenge for senior leaders.
- Governors understand that the school is not meeting the objectives and principles that UTCs are set up to deliver, but they have been unable to put this right quickly enough. Plans are being put in place to address this aspect of the UTC's work.
- Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used. However, they do not evaluate the effectiveness of the use of this funding through its impact, for example on raising these pupils' achievement. They now know that they should do this.
- Governors have procedures in place to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Governors check the school website to make sure it contains the information required and that it provides good access to essential and useful information for parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies, staff recruitment and training, links with external agencies and the arrangements to ensure that governors have oversight of safeguarding meet requirements and are fit for purpose.
- Pupils feel safe and this view is fully supported by their parents and teachers.
- The procedures were tested through a number of case studies and found to be secure.
- The assistant principal has recently taken on responsibility as the designated safeguarding lead. A recently appointed governor has taken the lead role for safeguarding. Together they are undertaking a thorough review of all aspects of safeguarding. Plans are in place to provide enhanced training for all staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Much teaching in key subjects is inadequate, including in mathematics and engineering, and leads to pupils and some students in the 16 to 19 provision making inadequate progress.
- Teaching does not establish and build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Too much work is at the same, too low, level. Pupils are not encouraged to develop deeper understanding.

- When pupils join the UTC at the start of Year 10, a baseline assessment is undertaken to establish their starting points. This is used to set end-of-course targets. However, these targets are not reviewed by teachers to take account of pupils' actual progress, resulting in work set at too low a level while pupils appear to be on track to achieve their target.
- The feedback pupils receive is ineffective. They do not know how well they are doing, how well they are expected to do or how to improve their work. In mathematics, for example, there are long periods where pupils have no idea if the work they have done is right or wrong.
- Some teaching is poorly planned so that learning is unstructured and pupils are unclear about what they are expected to do. Teachers are unable to use their specialist knowledge to support pupils' learning.
- Teaching has improved in English and many pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making the progress they are capable of. Teachers provide pupils with feedback that helps them to improve the quality of their work.
- Teaching is much stronger on computing and information and communication technology courses. In these subjects, teachers use their expertise and specialist knowledge well to carefully plan and structure learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils feel safe, are safe and are cared for well. They are well informed about risks to their physical, emotional and mental health and how to avoid them.
- Bullying is very rare. Pupils, and their parents, are unsure about how well it is dealt with because they have no experience of it.
- Pupils show little enthusiasm for their learning where teaching is poor or the course does not meet their needs well. They do not show the skills of successful learners. However, there is a tangible change in pupils' attitude to learning on the few occasions when they pursue practical courses, particularly when they are based in the workshop.
- Pupils value the two-week block of work experience in Year 10. They feel that this gives them some essential skills to prepare them for future employment and help them to make decisions about what they want to do.
- Leaders have found it difficult to recruit suitable pupils. Of the 72 who joined the UTC at the start of Year 10 in 2014, only 52 completed their education in the school; four were permanently excluded. Similarly, only 42 of the 60 who started in Year 12 completed their courses. While this has improved for current pupils, it is still a cause for concern.

- The careers guidance that pupils receive before the end of Year 11 does not prepare them well for 16 to 19 study programmes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils mostly behave well in lessons, even when they find the work too easy or it lacks relevance. Occasionally, they are distracted by others when teaching is poor. Their good behaviour is maintained well throughout the long day of seven one-hour lessons.
- There is a very harmonious atmosphere around the site at break and lunchtimes and during lesson changeovers. Pupils move promptly to lessons and mostly arrive ready to learn. They behave safely and sensibly. They get on well with each other and with adults.
- Pupils dress well and take a pride in their appearance.
- While attendance overall is below the national average, it is more in line with that typical of 14–16-year-old pupils. However, when compared with the same time last year, attendance has declined and too many pupils are persistently absent.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with that of others. While leaders monitor the attendance of individual pupils, they do not check the attendance, as a group, of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some of these pupils do not attend well although, in some cases, this is due to medical needs.
- The attendance of current 16 to 19 students is good and has improved now that it is recorded in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Current pupils do not make adequate progress in some key subjects. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, there has been insufficient improvement in some subjects from the poor performance in 2016.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not make enough progress in mathematics. Teachers take little account of what pupils already know, understand and can do despite the assessment undertaken when they join the UTC. Work is set at the same level for all pupils regardless of their previous achievement. Many find the work too easy and they are given no feedback to challenge them to improve the level and quality of their work.
- The progress of the most able pupils in mathematics is significantly inhibited by the lack of feedback and challenge.
- The progress made by pupils in Years 10 and 11 in science is variable. Too little account is taken of pupils' prior or current level of achievement. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not encouraged to develop deeper scientific reasoning and understanding.
- Many pupils in Years 10 and 11 make inadequate progress in engineering. Overall, the courses they follow are unsuitable and have too few practical elements. On the limited occasions when they can use the equipment and machinery in the workshop, many thrive.

- The progress made by 16–19-year-old students in engineering is widely variable, depending on the course they are following, but is often inadequate.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils and by those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with other pupils in the school and, therefore, often inadequate.
- Pupils' achievement in English was very low in 2016. Pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are making better progress. They receive feedback that helps them to improve the quality of their work and they respond to this well.
- Pupils make more progress on information and communication technology and computing courses as a result of better teaching.
- Pupils who are full time in alternative provision do not have access to the UTC's specialist curriculum. They make some limited progress in English and mathematics.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- The UTC provides a narrow range of 16 to 19 study programmes based on the engineering and computing specialism. This curriculum does not meet the needs of students well. There are too few practical-based courses. There is limited involvement of the UTC's industrial partners to provide contexts, relevance and opportunities for project-based learning. Too little use is made of the wide range of high-quality specialist facilities and equipment in the UTC.
- Too few pupils transfer from Year 11 to 16 to 19 courses in the UTC because many are not suited to the level 3 provision offered. Additionally, many leave after one year because they are on one-year level 2 courses. This does not meet the UTC aim of providing 14 to 19 progression in specialist areas.
- Many students on engineering courses make inadequate progress as a result of poor teaching. The work does not challenge students to work at the level they are capable of. They receive too little feedback to know how to improve their work.
- Students on computing courses make strong progress. The teaching is at a high level and teachers check carefully that students understand the work and support them well when needed.
- The small number of students taking level 3 courses in mathematics, including those who take some of their mathematics and physics at a local further education college, make the progress expected of them.
- Students who need to take GCSE English and/or mathematics make at least the progress expected of them.
- Leaders have established a range of opportunities for students to develop their employability skills, but have not identified these skills precisely or matched them closely enough to individual students' needs and aspirations. While leaders monitor what activities students undertake, they do not track how well these skills are being acquired throughout their time in the UTC. Too little is done to involve the industrial partners. However, all students have a two-week block of work experience and they value this highly.

- When they leave the UTC, all students move on to employment, an apprenticeship or higher education.

School details

Unique reference number	140972
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10024905

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Inman
Principal	Angela Barker-Dench
Telephone number	01793 207920
Website	http://utcswindon.co.uk/
Email address	info@utcswindon.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- UTC Swindon opened in September 2014 with pupils in Year 10 and 16–19-year-old students in Year 12.
- The UTC is sponsored by Oxford Brookes University and Johnson Matthey Fuel Cells. It works with a wide range of other partners, mostly involved in engineering, including

BMW, Honda, ARVAL, IET, HOCK TF (construction) and Swindon Borough Council.

- The principal has not been in school since October 2016 and the UTC is currently led by the deputy principal.
- The school is much smaller than the average secondary school.
- An average proportion of pupils in the school is eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan are well above average.
- A small proportion of pupils are from other than White British backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school uses the Swindon tuition service at Oakfield. Currently, two Year 11 pupils are in alternative provision.
- Because it only opened in 2014, there is no data for 2015 to show that the school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the UTC's senior leaders, other leaders and staff, the chair of the governing body, representing Oxford Brookes University, the governor representing the other main sponsor and one other governor.
- Discussions were held with many pupils, individually and in groups, around the site at break and lunchtimes over both days.
- In lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' work and discussed it with them. They compared the quality of the work with information about pupils' current progress. Inspectors also looked at a sample of pupils' work in engineering. Inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders for many of the visits to lessons.
- Inspectors met the UTC's designated safeguarding lead and looked at a wide range of documents and records about safeguarding, as well as checking that arrangements such as those for the maintenance of the single central record met all statutory requirements.
- Inspectors took account of the school leaders' and governors' self-evaluation and used this with senior leaders to agree inspection lines of enquiry. They also looked at a wide range of other documents and information supplied by the school about the analysis of current pupils' progress and achievement.
- Inspectors also took account of the 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 21 with additional comments. They also took account of the 12 responses to the online pupil survey and eight responses to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

James Sage, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Nelson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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