

Inspection of Doncaster UTC

College Road, Doncaster DN1 3BF

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Throughout Years 9 to 11, pupils follow one of two pathways: engineering or creative and digital media. In the sixth form, four different pathways are followed: engineering, computing, health science and creative and digital media. Throughout the school, pupils' lessons in these courses are taught by specialist teachers. Additional input to these courses is provided by industry experts, such as engineers, who are heavily involved in the school's curriculum offer.

Pupils in key stage 4 also study a range of other academic subjects, including more traditional GCSEs such as English, mathematics, science and geography. Pupils' academic experiences throughout school are generally positive. There is an embedded culture of reading throughout school. However, a small number of pupils who need additional support to read fluently do not routinely get the help they need.

In addition to preparing pupils for their next steps in education, leaders provide extensive opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work. The school's offer in this regard is noteworthy.

Pupils are happy to attend Doncaster UTC. Throughout the school, pupils behave well. Bullying is very rare. Standards of pupils' behaviour have improved over time. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum continues to be refined. This is important, as some pupils are unclear about what they have been taught about growing up in modern Britain.

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

Leaders' vision is to provide pupils with exceptional experiences in education. Despite only being open since September 2020, they have made strong progress towards this ambition.

Trustees and governors, many of whom represent partner organisations, provide the school with expert input and support. Many of these individuals have been involved with the university technical college (UTC) since its infancy. They have been heavily involved in the design of the school building. They have helped leaders to quality assure the courses on offer. They have supported school leaders with staff recruitment as the number of pupils on roll has increased rapidly. They consider the well-being of staff in every decision they make.

The UTC has a well-thought-through curriculum in both the main school and sixth form. Pupils access a range of technical and academic subjects. Subject leaders have thought carefully about their curriculum plans. They are mindful of the variation in pupils' experiences and prior knowledge when they join the UTC in Years 9 and 12. Staff use a variety of assessments to track pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment systems, such as the 'check 20' in mathematics, for example, test precisely what pupils have remembered from their recent units of work.

The routines within lessons are consistent throughout school. Pupils know what to expect as soon as they enter a classroom. Lessons, including those in the sixth form, are clearly explained and well understood by pupils. Pupils particularly enjoy the hands-on, interactive lessons linked to their chosen pathway.

Leaders are in the process of embedding a culture of reading throughout school. For many pupils, this is proving to be effective. However, this is notably less so for those pupils who still need help reading fluently. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same lessons as their peers. Those with social, emotional and mental health needs are particularly well looked after. However, more widely, the individual targets in place for pupils with SEND are not precise enough for them to achieve as well as they could across the curriculum.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are very well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. This includes the pupils who are identified as disadvantaged. The sixth formers who completed their studies in summer 2022 went on to appropriate destinations, many securing sought-after apprenticeships or places at university. In addition to first-class careers advice and guidance, pupils have extensive opportunities to interact with local employers. Partner organisations come into the UTC regularly to speak to pupils. Pupils regularly see their areas of specialism in the workplace, through visits, as part of curriculum projects and on formal work experience placements.

Pupils are taught about wider issues, such as the importance of healthy relationships, through the school's PSHE programme. All pupils in key stage 4 study GCSE citizenship. However, beyond this, some pupils have a more limited recollection of what they have been taught about growing up in modern Britain. Although the school has specialist clubs and activities, some pupils would also like further opportunities to develop their other talents and interests.

Pupils' behaviour is good throughout school, including in the sixth form. As the number of pupils has increased, leaders have had to adjust aspects of their behaviour system. Although staff have started to see the benefit of these changes, some pupils say the attitudes of others occasionally disrupt their learning. However, when a pupil does struggle to self-regulate, they are extremely well supported by staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know exactly who they need to speak to when they need help. This help is available in abundance. Pupils say they can speak to any member of staff, including the principal, if something needs sorting.

Leaders have established an entrenched culture of safeguarding throughout school. Staff training happens regularly, and appropriate checks are made on new staff.

Leaders take action when concerns arise. They engage with external agencies when necessary.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in the quality of the school's personal development offer. While pupils' preparation for the world of work is exceptional, the opportunities available to develop their other interests are less advanced. Additionally, pupils' awareness of the risks they face in life are not fully secure. Leaders should review the school's wider personal development offer to ensure it supports their vision of excellence.
- The targets leaders set for pupils with SEND are not consistently precise enough to help them achieve as well as they could across the curriculum. This makes it difficult for leaders to monitor successes and identify where further support is needed. Leaders should ensure that pupils' targets and support are carefully matched to the areas of the curriculum they find most difficult, ensuring staff understand their roles in helping pupils achieve these goals.
- Some pupils are unable to read with fluency and accuracy. The difficulty these pupils have in decoding text inhibits their ability to digest and understand what they have read. Leaders should ensure their assessment procedures identify exactly what aspects of reading pupils find difficult. They should ensure these pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise, remember and apply what they have learned.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	147838
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10243384
Type of school	Technical
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	721
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	231
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Isman-Egal
Principal	Garath Rawson
Website	www.doncasterutc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected 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 14 to 19.
- The school is sponsored by partner organisations. At the time of this inspection, its major partners include Agemaspark, Polypipe, Skanska, Volkerrail, Wabtec, Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield.
- The school opened in September 2020 and is part of the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the principal and several other senior leaders. The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the board of trustees and the governing body. The lead inspector also met the chief executive officer of the trust.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in engineering, creative and digital media, English, mathematics and science. These involved meeting subject leaders, reviewing curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to teachers, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of their work. The school's personal development offer was also reviewed by inspectors.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. They also spoke to pupils to gather their thoughts on pupils' behaviour. Behaviour, bullying and attendance records were reviewed.
- As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and other records were reviewed. The checks made when appointing new staff were scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with representatives from five partner organisations.
- The views of 36 members of staff and 80 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's surveys were also considered. Inspectors also spoke with a small number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nick Horn	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Searle	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wardle	His Majesty's Inspector
Kate Rowley	His Majesty's 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
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