

Inspection of South Devon UTC

Kingsteignton Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 2QA

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

South Devon UTC is an exciting place to learn. Pupils on the health sciences pathway have lessons in the 'Nightingale Ward'. The 'ward' is equipped with hospital beds and a range of technology to help pupils understand the experience of those who need care.

Pupils on the engineering pathway learn in workshops equipped with industry-standard machinery and software. The school is affiliated with the Royal Navy. Representatives from the Royal Navy come into school to talk to pupils about possible future careers. Pupils go on to secure apprenticeships with a wide range of employers in the local area and further afield.

Leaders actively prepare pupils for the workplace. Many find this highly motivating. On arrival, they learn about what makes someone employable. As pupils work on their employability skills, their behaviour and attitude towards school improves.

Pupils do not know many of their peers to begin with, but they make friends quickly. They rarely experience bullying. There is a spirit of openness and respect between pupils and staff. Pupils feel they are treated like adults, as if they were employees in waiting.

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

The school has recently joined a multi-academy trust. Senior leaders and governors from the school have worked closely with trust leaders to reimagine the curriculum. Together, they aim to provide a technical education which results in employment for pupils, and resilient, capable employees for local industry. Their vision for the school is ambitious.

The multi-academy trust has brought new leaders, including curriculum leaders, into the school. Pupils learn a well-designed curriculum. In the technical subjects, leaders have identified the big ideas in each pathway. They organise the units for pupils to study into a sequence that helps pupils to learn and remember the most important content. In the health sciences, the curriculum is new. Leaders recognise the need to check that pupils are learning the key content successfully as they go.

In the academic subjects, leaders have set out the knowledge they want pupils to gain. Teachers look for ways to promote pupils' personal development through the curriculum. In English, pupils develop their understanding of different perspectives through their reading experiences. Leaders have systems to monitor the impact of the curriculum, but they have not yet checked that each subject is working as intended. As a result, pupils are sometimes not clear about what they are learning and why.

Some pupils arrive at the school with weak literacy skills. These pupils receive extra support with their reading until they can comfortably access the curriculum. Many make significant progress. Pupils in the earliest stages of reading receive the phonics tuition they need from specialist staff. However, staff do not do enough to encourage pupils to enjoy reading. Pupils are not in the habit of reading for interest or pleasure and the library is not well used.

Leaders gather detailed information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) before they join the school. They use this information to build useful 'pupil profiles'. Teachers refer to these and adapt their teaching to make sure that pupils with SEND learn the most important curriculum content. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) and her team focus on preparing pupils for adulthood, as well as gaining qualifications. They understand the ways that pupils' needs change as they become students in the sixth form.

Pupils develop a strong work ethic. They benefit from well-planned encounters with employers. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. The governors provide strong role models for pupils hoping to take up positions in industry. Governors also support the well-being of staff. Staff are proud to be part of the school and its distinctive curriculum. Pupils and staff agree that everyone has an equal voice. They feel listened to and included in decisions.

There is a range of extra-curricular activities to support pupils' mental and physical health, such as sports clubs. Through the 'Life Skills' curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and show respect to others. They readily relate this learning to the workplace. Pupils' opportunities to learn about other faiths and beliefs are limited, especially in the sixth form. This, coupled with a reluctance among some pupils to sign up for lunchtime and after-school clubs, means that pupils do not develop their social skills as well as they could.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel comfortable reporting any worries or concerns to staff in the inclusion team. Leaders use early help to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive valuable support.

Leaders work closely with external partners, such as the police, to reduce the risk to pupils of criminal exploitation.

The trust provides effective training for staff and governors on sexual harassment and abuse. Leaders hold discussions with pupils about the curriculum and culture in the school. They have set clear boundaries for pupils around the importance of consent and the possible impact of so called 'banter'.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teaching does not present new information effectively. This means that pupils are not always clear about key learning points. Leaders should ensure that they monitor the impact of the developing curriculum closely to ensure that it is effective in each subject.
- Although the curriculum teaches pupils to read with fluency and insight, it does not do enough to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading. As a result, pupils do not read as widely, or as often, as they should. Leaders should encourage pupils to develop the habit of regularly reading for pleasure or interest.
- A significant proportion of pupils do not participate in the schools' extra-curricular programme as well as they could. This reduces the scope for pupils to develop their social skills. Opportunities to learn about and meet people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds are also limited. Leaders should ensure that there are enough opportunities to ensure that all pupils develop their social skills in a range of different contexts.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	141749
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10200974
Type of school	Technical
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	38
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Di Giuseppe
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Website	www.southdevonutc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 – 31 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a university technical college (UTC). It provides technical education for pupils aged 14-19. There are currently two technical pathways available to pupils: engineering, and health sciences. A third technical pathway in digital technology will be offered from September 2022.
- This is a smaller than average-sized school. The proportion of boys on roll is larger than the proportion of girls.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The school uses no alternative providers.
- The school joined the Education South West multi-academy trust in February 2021. South Devon UTC is one of five secondary schools in the trust.

- The chair and vice chair have remained as leaders of the local governing body. They work alongside trust leaders to provide governance.
- The school's sixth form is part of a collaboration with two local secondary schools, also members of the multi-academy trust. This means that students in the sixth form sometimes attend school on a different site. Students from other schools within the collaboration sometimes attend school at the UTC. There are currently 17 students who are dual-registered.
- The trust has appointed an executive headteacher to work with the head of college at the UTC.
- Some aspects of curriculum leadership are provided by the trust. This means that, in some subjects, the person responsible for the curriculum is employed by a different school within the trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of college, the chair and vice chair of governors, the chief education officer and the director of school improvement from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: engineering, health science, English and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also visited lessons, looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of adults working within the school. She met with a range of staff responsible for safeguarding pupils, including the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors held discussions with single sex groups of pupils to gather their views on the culture of the school.
- The lead inspector met with staff responsible for provision for pupils with SEND, including the SENCo, and a group of pupils with SEND to gather their views and experiences.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted staff survey, responses to the survey for pupils and responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including a small number of free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Battersby

Her Majesty's Inspector

Non Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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