

Bolton UTC

Deane Road, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL3 5AG

Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
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

- Pupils who started at the college in September 2015 express considerable disappointment with the promises that the college made to them and the reality of what they received.
- Courses were set up without any regard to pupils' abilities and needs. Leaders placed many pupils on inappropriate courses.
- Over the first year and in both key stages, teaching was very weak.
- In its first year, the impact of poor teaching and inappropriate courses resulted in very low levels of achievement across the college.
- Numbers joining the college this year dropped dramatically. A large number of current Year 11 pupils say that they will look elsewhere for their sixth-form education.
- Safeguarding is ineffective.
- The relationship between leaders at the highest level in the college began to break down early last year, causing them to be distracted from their core role of college improvement.
- Staff are confused about leaders' roles and are unsure to whom they should turn for support and guidance. Teachers' morale is currently very low.
- Governors have been ineffective in quickly addressing poor leadership because they have not had the systems or the capacity to make objective analyses of the performance of important aspects of the college's work.
- There is too much reliance on a single organisation to give the college support and guidance. Consequently, the college has not embraced the culture of a university technical college (UTC). Local industry is not represented well enough on the governing body. The college's links with local industry are limited and weak. Very few pupils receive high-quality work experience.
- Insufficient time is given to some senior and middle leaders to enable them to adequately fulfil their responsibilities.

The school has the following strengths

- The college has recently appointed teachers and leaders with the potential to accelerate improvement. Teaching and achievement have shown some improvement this year.
- Governance has recently been strengthened. The recently appointed consultant has a very accurate view of the performance of the college.

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?

- Undertake a review of governance.
- Improve the capacity of the governing body to:
 - fully embrace the culture of a UTC
 - accurately evaluate the performance of the college through objective analysis
 - hold leaders, including the chief executive officer (CEO), rigorously to account for the quality of education provided by the college
 - show integrity in the recruitment of new pupils.
- Ensure that college leaders and managers are given time throughout the week to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make by:
 - improving the accuracy with which teachers evaluate the achievement of their pupils
 - ensuring that teachers use their understanding of what their pupils already understand and can do to plan learning activities that better meet pupils' needs
 - ensuring that leaders give support to those teachers whose work is not good enough
 - ensuring that, as a priority, teachers who are timetabled to teach a class do so without being redirected to other activities.
- Ensure that pupils start courses that are appropriate based on their prior attainment as well as their career aspirations.
- Improve the effectiveness of safeguarding by ensuring that procedures include:
 - a full and accurate record of what has been done to ensure the safeguarding of individuals
 - a full and accurate description of what needs to be done, by whom and by when to ensure the safeguarding of individuals
 - regular and frequent reviews of each pupil's case to ensure that all staff and external agencies are doing what is expected of them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The college recruited a significant number of pupils in the run-up to its opening in September 2015. Numbers starting in Year 10 and in Year 12 were much higher than had been anticipated. However, considerable failures at the most senior leadership level within the college, and in the college's governance, led to the college failing to provide an adequate education in its first year.
- The number of pupils joining the college in September 2016 was significantly lower than in the previous year. At this stage, the number of new pupils being recruited to start in September 2017 is again low. A large proportion of current Year 11 pupils who spoke to inspectors said they will not be returning to this college for their post-16 education.
- Year 11 and Year 13 pupils who spoke to inspectors said they 'were sold a dream' and that they are now very disappointed with the reality. The college is a very attractive environment, with outstanding facilities, and yet pupils say they have very limited opportunities to use them. They say they were promised high-quality education but teaching was very poor and they made little progress. Pupils have been on courses that were not appropriate for them. The confidence and aspirations of pupils have been knocked.
- Staff are not clear about the roles of the chief executive officer (CEO) and of other most senior leaders. Throughout the college's first year, staff perceived a growing tension between leaders at senior level which had a detrimental impact on the leadership of the college. The college principal resigned at the end of December 2016 and this role has not yet been filled. The college's vice-principal is currently the acting headteacher. Staff morale is low because they lack trust in the effectiveness of the most senior leaders.
- Governors and senior leaders can describe their aspirations for the college, its ethos and culture. So far, however, they have fallen well short of achieving these.
- Governors appointed a vice-principal in June 2016 whose responsibility was to improve the quality of teaching. They have made other good appointments recently. In the very short time he has been in post, the vice-principal has been very effective in improving teaching and pupils' level of achievement. Pupils agree that teaching has improved. An examination of pupils' work over this and the previous term shows an upturn in their progress. This member of staff continues to be as effective in his acting role of headteacher. Teachers say the support they have received this year, including professional development, has improved. Those teachers whom inspectors spoke to could point to training and support that have had a direct and positive influence on how they perform in the classroom. These teachers also described a performance management system that meets requirements.
- Other senior and middle leaders show promise. However, college improvement has not been fast enough because leaders at this level and the acting headteacher have too little time to fulfil their responsibilities.

- The college's evaluation of its own effectiveness is too generous. Leaders have failed to recognise the considerable weaknesses of the college's first year. They do not have systems in place to provide them with a reliable and objective view of how well all aspects of the college are performing. When they do know there is a weakness in their provision, there is a tendency to dismiss this as unimportant or to explain away the deficiency. A significant weakness is that only about one in 10 pupils across Year 11 and Year 13 have participated in meaningful work experience, an element of provision that is critical to a UTC.
- The college's system for monitoring the progress of pupils is reliant on the accuracy of teachers' assessments. These assessments are not accurate and overestimate the standards that pupils have reached.
- The Baker Dearing Educational Trust regularly monitors the college's performance. The trust has an accurate view of how well the college is performing. The trust has had concerns about the effectiveness of leadership for some time, particularly about the detrimental effect that the weakening relationship between the principal and the CEO was having on the quality of pupils' education. They communicated their concerns to the governing body. The trust is disappointed that governors did not take early and effective action to resolve this problem.
- In December 2016, the college engaged a consultant who is both experienced and successful in supporting UTCs to improve. With her considerable support, the college's improvement plan now focuses on many of the deficiencies identified during this inspection. The plan gives clarity regarding who has to do what, by when and, most importantly, how intended improvements will specifically improve pupils' achievement and personal development.
- The curriculum matches the requirements of a UTC because the college offers a suitable range of subjects and, in that sense, is compliant. However, leaders gave too little thought to the needs and abilities of the pupils who were first recruited to the UTC. Many pupils were placed on unsuitable A-level courses. They did not have the prior understanding that would have enabled them to cope. The process of addressing this by moving these pupils onto more appropriate vocational courses was badly managed. Consequently, pupils and parents failed to fully understand why pupils were promised A-level courses that were now being withdrawn. A large proportion of pupils starting Year 10 in September 2015 were assigned to modern foreign language courses even though they had no foundation in that language at key stage 3. This was not done for the benefit of pupils' education. A failing in leadership meant they were unable to anticipate the consequential problems. In the college's first year, the curriculum did not match the needs of the pupils. This is another aspect of the college that has improved this year.
- Pupils are faced with too many lessons that are not taught by their regular teacher. There are a variety of reasons for this, but nevertheless, this inconsistency is having a detrimental effect on the quality of pupils' education. Teacher absence was high throughout the college's first year and continues to be high. The college is running a considerable number of additional support sessions for pupils who need to catch up after very poor teaching last year. Some of these sessions take teachers away from their timetabled pupils and this, in turn, slows their progress. Enrichment activities and

sessions to develop employability skills are also affected by staff commitments being changed. Pupils' education continues to be disrupted.

- Subjects, cultural studies and a programme of enrichment activities make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils choose from a wide range of activities that broaden their education and enhance their personal development. These include Latin for prospective medical practitioners, ethical dilemmas in science, volunteering and global citizenship, outdoor education and psychology.
- Until December 2016, the college engaged an outside agency to provide careers advice and guidance. Currently, there is no effective provision of high-quality and impartial careers guidance.
- The college has received a large number of complaints from parents, pupils and staff. These focus mainly on weaknesses in safeguarding and leadership. Inspection evidence found leadership to be inadequate and safeguarding procedures to be ineffective. The college has improved the way it deals with complaints, but governors say that they find it difficult to investigate anonymous complaints fully.
- The college receives additional funding to support the education of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The college has a general understanding of how effectively this money is spent, but not a detailed one. They know that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are generally performing well. They also know that disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others in English but not in mathematics. They do not fully understand the barriers these pupils have to their learning and so have not targeted this funding to pupils' specific needs.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the college is weak. Governors have presided over a failing college.
- Over the first year, governors failed to hold the postholder of CEO to account for the college's poor performance. At that time, governors accepted much of the information given to them without challenging it rigorously.
- Two recent appointments, including a new chair of governors, have strengthened the capacity of the governing body. Between them, they have considerable experience in running highly successful schools and management of complex organisations. Their impact on improving the college has yet to be demonstrated.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Written safeguarding records for vulnerable pupils are inadequate. They do not describe clear, specific and agreed procedures that have to be taken to ensure that individual pupils are safe. They do not specify who has responsibility to take action. There are no specified times or dates by which actions have to be completed. This eliminates opportunities to systematically check that all that has to be done is done, and so makes systems and procedures ineffective.

- Senior staff and governors do not know if all is being done to keep pupils safe. They cannot hold staff to account for their responsibilities in safeguarding.
- Good training helps staff identify concerns. Most, but not all, know specifically what action should be taken if they have a concern about a pupil's safety. Staff are informed about pupils whom they need to look out for and what they should do to keep them safe.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while using computers or using social media. Most pupils can explain how the college helps them to be safe online. The college has effective filtering systems on their computer network to minimise the possibility of accessing inappropriate material.
- Work to prevent pupils developing extremist ideologies has a high profile in the college and is effective.
- The college has developed good contacts with services within the local authority charged with keeping children safe. The college knows when it is appropriate to contact these agencies and has done so.
- The college makes timely contact with a pupil's home if a pupil is absent without explanation, thus ensuring that they are safe. College staff pay particular attention to pupils whose attendance is poor.
- There is some prejudice-based bullying in the college, including homophobic and racist bullying. However, college records show that almost all of these incidents have occurred in the past two Septembers. This suggests that the college is effective in dealing with these issues through education and explanation of their expectations. This helps support the victims of bullying and improves their safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Although there is evidence that the quality of teaching has improved this year, over time, it is inadequate. There are many reasons for this weakness, including the way that teaching has been organised. Leaders placed many pupils on inappropriate courses. Teaching was, and still is, disrupted by teachers' absence. Some teaching was just not good enough and there was no effective support to improve it.
- The teaching of mathematics last year was particularly weak, with all groups making inadequate progress. This year, however, the teaching of mathematics is much stronger, with most groups now learning more quickly. There has been a considerable increase in the number of mathematics teachers employed by the college and an improvement in the quality of teaching is helping pupils to catch up.
- The teaching of English is not well planned and does not match the learning activities to the needs and abilities of pupils. The most able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work to ensure that they attain the standards of which they are capable. Similarly, least-able pupils are not given sufficient support to fully understand their learning before the class moves on. As in mathematics, there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching experienced by different classes.
- In other subjects, pupils experience considerable variability in the quality of teaching. When teaching is most effective, pupils enjoy their learning and fully engage with their

work. Teachers focus on ensuring that pupils can explain what they have learned and are given plenty of opportunities to apply what they have learned; practising and consolidating.

- Pupils do not have equality of opportunity because of the considerable variation in the quality of teaching provided by different teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- There have been occasions when staff have shouted at pupils, upsetting them and not showing the type of behaviour that the college expects. There have been no recorded incidents of this type this term.
- Weaknesses in the college's procedures to safeguard pupils mean that leaders cannot guarantee pupils' safety.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are promoted well. Suitable procedures are taken to limit risk when pupils are working in practical sessions. Pupils are closely supervised when walking to the physical education block in the neighbouring university.
- Generally, relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Pupils say that they could easily talk to an adult if they had any concerns and they are confident that staff work to support them well. Teachers know their pupils well and notice when pupils are not their usual selves. Pupils also look out for each other and support one another.
- The programme of enrichment activities, when delivered well, makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. However, too often teachers are taken away from these valuable sessions to help other pupils catch up on missed learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although overall attendance of pupils is close to the national average for secondary schools, this masks a considerable increase in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. College leaders are trying a range of strategies to improve attendance and there is evidence to show that these are working for some pupils. Despite this, attendance is not yet good.
- In classes, for the most part, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and engage well. They take pride in their work. When asked, pupils say that their learning can be interrupted by poor classroom behaviour; however, this is linked to the quality of teaching and teachers' ability to manage behaviour.
- Both pupils' descriptions and college records point to occurrences of bullying, and always based on prejudice. The college is effective in dealing with these incidents. Almost all incidents happen at the start of the year, before high expectations of behaviour can be explained and established.

- As pupils move round the college, they generally do so calmly. Girls always do. However, there are occasions when boys' behaviour in corridors between lessons can be boisterous.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The first cohort of pupils to attend the college will sit their public examinations next term. So no results for this college have yet been published. When this information is published, it will measure the progress these pupils will have made from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11. Since pupils start this college in Year 10, using that published information to evaluate the quality of learning in this college would be misleading.
- Last year, across all subjects, pupils made inadequate progress because the management and organisation of teaching, and teaching itself, were inadequate.
- This year, pupils are making better progress, but it is not good enough to mitigate the considerable weaknesses of the previous year. Much better organisation and management of learning and the recruitment of many better teachers have inspired this improvement.
- English has been a relative and reasonably consistent strength of the college. However, standards are still not as high as they ought to be, particularly for the most able. In mathematics, pupils have much further to catch up. The Year 11 mathematics top-ability set started this year doing work that most able mathematicians would cover towards the end of their primary school. They have made progress, but are not currently at the standard they should be for their age and time of year. Middle-ability learners make slowest progress in mathematics.
- Pupils studying triple sciences and computer science are much closer to where they ought to be than pupils studying the additional science course. This is directly due to the quality of teaching experienced by pupils in these groups.
- Pupils studying a modern foreign language are lagging behind where they should be in their studies. This is due to pupils having a weak or no foundation in the language from key stage 3.
- Disadvantaged pupils appear to making quicker progress in English than other pupils, therefore catching them up. However, disadvantaged pupils in mathematics still lag behind others. The college does not make good enough use of its additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make strong progress.
- Low educational standards and limited experience of work and employment do not prepare pupils well enough for them to undertake employment or further study that match their potential. However, their stronger personal development, behaviour and attitudes will serve them well.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- The most senior leaders in the college have failed to ensure that the leaders of the sixth form have sufficient time to execute their role. As a result, they struggle to

manage effectively the 16 to 19 study programme due to the vast majority of their time being spent teaching and too little time being focused on improving the quality of provision. Consequently, the standards of teaching, learning and assessment and ultimately students' achievement are inadequate.

- Leaders and managers have failed to develop suitable partnerships with local employers to support the development of students' work experience opportunities and develop their employability skills. Very few students receive their entitlement to high-quality external work placements.
- Many students, particularly in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, are making inadequate progress. This is as a result of poor teaching and, over the college's first year, poor-quality assurance systems. Students underachieve in both academic and vocational courses. Monitoring of students' progress was ineffective. Leaders and teachers were not able to identify quickly students who were underperforming. Teachers were unable to plan work for students well, because they did not know what students had previously understood and could do. A large proportion of most-able students are making poor progress because they are not being given challenging work that helps them attain high standards. Leaders have very recently implemented improved systems to monitor the progress of students, demonstrating how provision for the sixth form is improving, slowly.
- Students whom inspectors spoke to said that they do not receive appropriate or helpful support to assist them to move onto the next stages of their education or employment. Currently, there is no provision within the college to give high-quality advice and guidance to students about how to move on to their chosen careers.
- Students have an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the college and in their personal lives. They receive information on the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism at induction. However, staff do not reinforce these messages well enough throughout the academic year. Students' attitudes to their work are generally good, despite being frustrated by the lack of progress they made last year. Relationships between teachers and students are good.

School details

Unique reference number	141941
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10033574

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Technical
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	362
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Webster
Acting headteacher	Liam McDaid
Telephone number	01204 374848
Website	www.utcbolton.org
Email address	reception@utcbolton.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- University technical colleges (UTCs) are usually smaller than average schools for 14- to 19-year-olds. They focus heavily, but not exclusively, on science, technology, engineering and mathematical subjects. All their technical, academic and practical learning is designed to be applied in the workplace. The college's specialism usually reflects the local economy. Bolton UTC specialises in health science and engineering. The college's sponsor organisation is the University of Bolton.

- In this college, the governing body has ultimate responsibility for the quality of education provided. The CEO is accountable to the governing body and the principal or headteacher is accountable to the CEO.
- The college's principal resigned from his post at the end of last term. An acting headteacher currently has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the college.
- During its development, the college was given support by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, whose focus is the promotion and support of new and existing UTCs.
- The college does not meet requirements on the publication of information. It does not give sufficient detail about the different curriculum and courses it offers. It does not publish a clear strategy for spending the additional funding it receives for disadvantaged pupils. Its equality and diversity policy does not refer to all the protected characteristics. Parents cannot access the college's special educational needs report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted’s published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and aspects of the quality of leadership and management in the college. While on site, inspectors had concerns about the overall quality of education being provided. Inspectors converted the inspection to one conducted under section 5 of the Education Act.
- Inspectors held meetings with the CEO, acting headteacher and other leaders and managers. The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to pupils during their social times.
- Inspectors met with a group of teachers and also spoke to individual teachers.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the Baker Dearing Trust.
- College documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding checks, information about pupils’ achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors also visited classrooms with leaders to speak with pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.
- The CEO and other senior leaders were party to many of the inspection activities.

Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Paul Cocker	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Anne Seneviratne	Her Majesty’s Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017