

Medway UTC

South Side Three Rd, Chatham, Kent ME4 4FQ

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

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

- Until very recently, governors have abrogated their responsibility for maintaining a high standard of education in the school. Insufficient challenge was offered to previous leaders.
- The curriculum is too narrow, a computing course had been cancelled and there has been no provision for physical education or religious education in the school.
- Since the school opened, there has been significant turbulence in staffing. Governors have not ensured that training is good enough to enable leaders and teachers to carry out their duties effectively.
- Leaders' development plans are not fit for purpose. They do not offer an effective framework to underpin the rapid improvements to teaching, assessment, behaviour and leadership that are required.
- There is a culture of low expectation across the UTC. As a result of weak teaching, pupils' achievement in GCSEs and in A levels was particularly poor last year. Current progress in all year groups is very weak.
- Teachers do not use assessment to design activities at the right level to match the learning needs of pupils. As a result, all pupils, but particularly the most able, those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the disadvantaged, make very poor progress.
- Behaviour in lessons is poor. Pupils are frequently distracted, off task and, in some lessons, disruptive. This slows the pace of learning.
- Numbers joining the school have dropped dramatically. Attendance is declining. Parents and pupils are dissatisfied with the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 4.

The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is effective.
- Outcomes in the construction and engineering courses in the sixth form are higher than elsewhere in the school.
- Working with external consultants from The Howard Academy Trust (THAT), the new interim principal has shared a more accurate view of the poor performance within the school. New ideas and resources have been introduced but it is too early to see an impact of these on pupils' progress.

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?

- Establish effective governance, leadership and management by:
 - setting out in development plans specific targets and measurable milestones for what will be achieved at key points in the year, to enable senior leaders and governors to improve monitoring
 - ensuring that governors become skilled at using progress information to challenge leaders and hold them effectively to account for the quality of teaching, learning and achievement of all groups of pupils
 - making sure that leaders and managers at all levels receive suitable training and support for their role in the school.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - plan challenging lessons that meet the needs of different groups of pupils
 - have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and eliminate the disruptive behaviour in lessons
 - provide regular feedback to pupils on their work that gives them precise guidance on what to improve
 - use sharply focused interventions and skilful questioning to promote the rapid progress of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Accelerate the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities by:
 - training and equipping teachers with the skills needed to swiftly reduce the gaps in these pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - making sure that their attendance at least matches the average attendance of other pupils nationally.
- Ensure that the curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils' needs.

External reviews of governance and the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Until the recent arrival of the new interim principal, and the input of external education advisers, senior leaders and governors had an overgenerous view of the quality of education provided by the school. This has now changed and senior leaders and governors rightly recognise that the current provision is inadequate and pupils underachieve significantly.
- Governors and leaders have not demonstrated that they have the capacity needed to secure the improvements needed. Actions they have taken have been too slow, ineffective or have been too recent to have had sufficient effect.
- The school's current self-evaluation and school development planning documents lack detail and precision and so are not fit for purpose. These documents do not provide a detailed or cohesive analysis of standards in the school or a suitable framework for school improvement.
- Leaders have not been effective in establishing a culture of high expectation since the UTC opened in September 2015. Difficulties with recruitment and a significant turnover of teaching staff have hindered attempts to improve the school.
- During the first two years of the school, some teachers were never observed teaching by senior leaders; others did not have a clear line management system. Over time, leaders had not identified areas where teaching has not been effective enough because they had the impression that it was better than it was.
- Over the last three months, senior leaders have worked with external consultants to introduce new monitoring systems. They quickly identified that poor-quality teaching, learning and assessment are widespread across the school. However, these new systems are still reliant on external support from education advisers and have not had time to have an impact on standards.
- Several middle leaders have not received sufficient training to complete all aspects of their jobs to a high standard. There was no formal programme of external moderation of assessments and pupils' work until last term. Consequently, subject leaders have not been able to recognise and address weaknesses in their subject areas.
- Over time, governors and previous senior leaders have failed to support staff at all levels to do their jobs. Induction programmes were poor, training weak and too little focus was placed on developing teaching and learning. Several staff report that they have little faith in middle leaders. Newly qualified teachers have received far too little support, guidance and training.
- The school receives additional funding to support the education of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have plans in place for how this money is spent and some procedures are in place. However, teachers are not well enough informed with information to ensure that they plan lessons and activities that meet these pupils' needs. Currently there are no teaching assistants in the school. Bespoke support plans have been produced for only a handful of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. No additional information has been provided to teachers about the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils they teach. Consequently, many of the pupils in

these groups are not having their needs met in lessons and have made very poor progress over time.

- The curriculum is too narrow and does not meet pupils' needs. Specialist courses in engineering and construction have been offered alongside GCSEs in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, a course in computing ceased and pupils were transferred to other courses. In addition, the school has not met the requirements for the provision of physical education or religious education.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that subjects, ethics sessions and enrichment activities provide an effective contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While the school launched a combined cadet force in September 2017, the curriculum offers very few other opportunities for pupils to develop teamwork and social skills. In addition, provision for personal, social and health education is particularly weak. Consequently, pupils are not sufficiently equipped with the skills they need for their chosen career paths or for life in modern Britain.
- Individual pupils' attendance figures are monitored with support offered for vulnerable pupils to improve their attendance. However, leaders have been slow to address the declining overall attendance figures. Insufficient attention is given to ensure that all groups are supported to attend well. Currently, girls' attendance is well below that of boys and disadvantaged pupils' attendance is well below that of their peers and the national average.
- Leaders have given too little thought to the prior attainment, needs and aspirations of pupils recruited to the UTC both in Year 10 and in Year 12. Some pupils were placed on inappropriate A-level and vocational courses. They did not have the prior understanding that would enable them to cope, so subsequently several changes were made. This process was not managed well, leading parents and pupils to become frustrated and unclear about the reasons for the changes.
- The new interim principal, working in partnership with external consultants from THAT, has wasted no time in introducing several new ideas and approaches that have won the respect of staff and governors. It is too soon yet to see the impact of these on pupils' outcomes. The interim principal has also quickly gained the trust and confidence of many parents. This is because of his honest recognition of current standards, commitment to the values of the school as a UTC and his ambition to improve provision.

Governance of the school

- Governors came with a wealth of useful knowledge and experience from their business and educational backgrounds. They worked hard to oversee the successful building of the Medway UTC and its impressive facilities. However, they have failed to adequately track or challenge the standard of education within the school since it opened. Consequently, they have presided over a failing school.
- Governors do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring a high enough standard of teaching and learning. Until recently, they had not sought input from a broad enough range of external sources and leaders within the school. As a result, they have not been sufficiently well informed to challenge the very poor progress made by pupils in GCSEs and A levels. In addition, they have not challenged the weaknesses in

leadership since the school opened in September 2015.

- Governors were too slow to respond to the recommendations made by an external review of governance last year. They have recently signed off leaders' weak self-evaluation and school improvement documents without challenge.
- Governors do fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties and check that policies, practices and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Organised and appropriate systems are in place to ensure that leaders check the suitability of staff and keep careful records. School leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment procedures.
- Staff understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to keeping pupils safe. They receive training at the correct level to be confident that their knowledge and understanding are up to date.
- There are effective systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Leaders work diligently to engage wider expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils. They ensure that appropriate records are kept of the communications with outside agencies.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and know who to talk to should they have any concerns. While a minority of parents expressed concerns, the majority said their child was safe and well looked after at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is not effectively planned to meet the needs of the pupils at the school. All too frequently, pupils all get the same work, regardless of their starting points and learning needs. Support for the least able, the most able and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is inadequate. Teachers' low expectations and lack of challenge mean that too many pupils do not reach their full potential.
- Across the curriculum, teachers' questioning skills are notably poor. Too often teachers explain concepts without even checking or probing pupils' own knowledge and understanding. Consequently, most pupils tend to be passive in lessons or disengage from the task set. This lack of verbal interaction between teachers and pupils means that pupils' oracy and literacy skills are frequently under-developed. In lessons, and pupils' books over time, inspectors observed that pupils with low prior attainment are often unable to complete tasks and the most able are not stretched.
- Pupils' confidence in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is low as they are not challenged to discuss, debate or reflect upon their learning. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned to other contexts and challenge deeper thinking.
- Where teachers give feedback to pupils, commonly it is restricted to simple praise for completion of tasks. Too little attention is given to addressing pupils' misconceptions. Even when there are instances where more detailed guidance is provided, most pupils

do not act on this feedback to refine and improve their work. Consequently, many pupils do not demonstrate the capacity to learn from their mistakes.

- The teaching of English and science in key stage 4 is poor with all groups making inadequate progress. The teaching in mathematics is very variable. In all three subjects there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. In addition, insufficient attention and support are given to disadvantaged pupils, or those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to enable them to make strong progress from their starting points.
- Literacy and mathematics are not well developed across the curriculum. Too often work is insufficiently challenging and too few opportunities exist for extended writing tasks which promote deeper thinking and reflection on what has been learned. Similarly, mathematical skills are not developed well across the different subjects. Frequently, graphs, diagrams and charts lack the precision and detail required in GCSE courses. In key stage 5, teachers do not insist that arithmetic and equations are applied with the high levels of accuracy required in the specialist courses.
- Many pupils do not take a pride in their work. In pupils' books there are frequent examples of unfinished work, graffiti and/or torn-out pages. Errors in their work are not addressed and incomplete work remains unchecked. Therefore pupils do not have a sufficiently accurate source of revision for assessments and examinations.
- Several parents responding to Parent View expressed concern about how turbulence in staffing has impacted upon the quality of teaching. They are worried that pupils are not making enough progress or being suitably well-prepared for their examinations. Inspectors' reviews of pupils' work over time confirmed that pupils are ill-prepared.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' well-being is given a high enough priority. Although pupils receive regular ethics sessions, company time and assemblies, leaders rightly report that the quality of personal, social and health education delivered in these sessions is very variable. Pupils told inspectors that whether you cover key subjects during ethics sessions depends on the teacher you have.
- Careers education and guidance are weak. Staff agree that the oversight and development of them has been haphazard. Pupils are aware of different career options in their chosen profession in the school's specialist subjects. However, their understanding lacks depth. For example, older pupils interested in engineering lacked a detailed understanding of the different fields of design, production and maintenance or the different types of engineering careers within these three fields. Recent attempts to introduce a better structure to careers education and guidance have not yet made a difference.
- The narrow curriculum with its lack of sporting activities, and limited opportunities to participate in clubs, restricts pupils' wider personal development. Too little attention is given to developing teamwork and social skills. Nearly three quarters of the pupils who responded to the survey identified that they rarely or never participate in out-of-school

activities.

- Leaders do maintain records of incidents of bullying and the actions that have been taken. Pupils recognise that incidents of bullying are declining in the school. Nevertheless, pupils in all years reported that staff do not always follow up on teasing and bullying when it does occur. Key stage 4 pupils recognise and value equalities. However, some pupils expressed concern to an inspector that occasional sexist comments, and pupils' use of homophobic terms as derogatory comments, go unchallenged by some staff. A significant minority of parents and pupils reported that they do not trust staff to deal with bullying effectively or to resolve the issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Staff do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. Inspectors observed many examples in lessons where poor behaviour was unchallenged. Pupils and parents expressed concerns about behaviour.
- Leaders and teachers have not established high enough expectations of behaviour in lessons. Passivity, disengagement and low-level disruption are commonplace across the different subject areas. In some lessons, pupils persistently chatter, or are off-task, and pupils are often dismissive to teaching staff.
- Over half of the staff responding to the survey do not believe that behaviour is good and two thirds believe that not all staff manage pupils' behaviour well. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is high. Pupils and staff told inspectors that they recognise and respect the new interim principal's higher expectations for behaviour. However, it is too soon yet to see a significant impact of them on pupils' attitudes.
- All pupils are smartly dressed and most are polite and conduct themselves well around the site. However, some are disrespectful to each other, staff and visitors.
- Overall attendance has fallen over time and is now slightly below the national average. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that effective strategies are used so that all groups attend well. The attendance of girls is below that of boys. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is particularly poor and limits the progress made by this group.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- 2017 was the first year that pupils from the school sat public examinations. From these examinations, the published progress information measures the progress pupils have made from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11. Since pupils start Medway UTC in Year 10, solely using this information to evaluate the quality of learning in the school would be misleading. However, this information highlights underperformance in English, mathematics and science and across the curriculum, including in the school's specialist subjects of engineering and construction and the built environment. It also identifies that disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress than their peers, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Current pupils are not faring any better. The new interim principal and THAT consultants' recent activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not yet had sufficient time to impact on outcomes. The quality of pupils' work and

ineffectiveness of teachers' assessment and tracking systems mean that pupils are ill-advised of their actual rates of progress.

- Inspectors' visits to lessons and reviews of pupils' books confirm that the progress being made by Year 10 and Year 11 in English and science is extremely weak. Progress in mathematics is very variable. The new interim principal and external consultants are in agreement and have confirmed to senior leaders and governors that outcomes are inadequate.
- Leaders did not establish a baseline assessment when these pupils entered the school. Consequently, leaders and teachers are unable to provide a clear view of the progress that pupils have made since they joined the school. In all subjects, all groups of pupils are achieving far less than might be expected close to the end of key stage 4.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make poor rates of progress. Although leaders have sought to identify the barriers to learning for this group, teachers are not providing for their needs in lessons.
- Teachers are not promoting literacy and mathematics well enough across the curriculum. This, together with a legacy of weak teaching and the inadequate range of subjects within the curriculum, means that pupils are very poorly prepared for their next stage of education or employment.
- Externally moderated assessments of Year 11 pupils' attainment in exam-style questions have recently been completed for the first time. Leaders have used this information to target support for smaller groups of pupils during regular, afternoon intervention sessions. However, there is no routine monitoring or quality assurance of these sessions by leaders. Consequently, there is no evidence that these sessions have accelerated the progress made by the most able or by specific groups of pupils who lag behind.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- Over time, leadership of the sixth form has been very weak. There are no well-established tracking and monitoring systems. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear insight into the progress sixth formers are making in their chosen courses. Governors and senior leaders have failed to provide sufficient induction and training to support the head of sixth form in his role.
- The curriculum offered in the sixth form is too narrow and does not meet requirements. Students expressed their frustration at weaknesses in teaching and the variability in the quality of their tutors. There is a lack of suitable and relevant non-qualification activities in the sixth form that will support students with their chosen study programmes. In line with the rest of the school, there is also a lack of ways for students to develop leadership skills, be involved in sports or take part in personal development programmes. Similarly, careers education and guidance in the sixth form is not meeting students' needs for their future study or chosen career pathways.
- In 2017, outcomes in the narrow range of A levels were poor; students' progress was significantly below the national average. Students had been accepted on to courses without having previously obtained suitable skills or levels of understanding. Teachers had not ensured adequate provision to help these students to catch up. In 2017,

progress in vocational BTEC courses was stronger.

- Currently, students are making inadequate progress, particularly in A levels. In many subject areas students' work is not well organised. This is a result of poor teaching over time and the historic lack of quality assurance systems. Students underachieve in both vocational and academic qualifications. Weak monitoring systems mean that leaders and teachers are not able to identify quickly students at risk of underperforming.
- Teachers are not able to plan appropriately challenging work for students. This is because they do not know what students already understand and can do. Teachers' questioning skills are as weak in the sixth form as they are in the rest of the school. In addition, many students' mathematical and literacy skills are poor. Leaders and teachers are not addressing these weaknesses. Consequently, students are not able to fully engage with course content to make strong progress in either their academic or vocational courses.
- Students are suitably informed about how to keep themselves safe in school and in their personal lives. Students' attitudes towards their work are generally positive, despite being frustrated by poor-quality teaching. Relationships between students and staff are generally good. However, ineffective use is made of the independent study time at the end of the day when students are unsupervised. During these sessions, many students chatter, fail to use this time constructively and show little respect to each other or to visitors.
- The quality of leaders' communication and partnerships with local employers is variable. Consequently, while some students praise the quality of work experience they have had as part of their vocational studies, other students and their parents expressed disappointment. Working with employers, the school does provide a range of opportunities to develop employability skills through events such as careers fairs and interview skills workshops. These have been valued by pupils and students.

School details

Unique reference number	142081
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10040912

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

Type of school	Other secondary
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	278
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Charman
Interim Principal	Paul Cottam
Telephone number	01634 505800
Website	www.medwayutc.co.uk
Email address	medwayutc@medwayutc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. It does not publish the required detail about the curriculum and the different courses on offer for each year group. The school's equality and diversity policy does not refer to all of the protected characteristics. Parents cannot access the school's annual SEN information report.
- The university technical college (UTC) opened in September 2015. In line with all UTCs it is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Medway UTC has space for 600 pupils.
- Medway UTC is sponsored by the University of Greenwich and a range of employers,

including BAM Construct UK, BAE Systems, Bouygues UK, Delphi Diesel Systems, The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board, Federation of Small Businesses, Kreston Reeves, Medway Council, Mid Kent College, Redrow Homes and the Royal School of Military Engineering.

- As a UTC, the school caters for pupils from the age of 14 to 19. It specialises in engineering together with construction and the built environment. The school day is longer than the usual school day. Pupils start at 8.30am and leave at 5pm.
- Most pupils and students are White British. The proportion from a minority ethnic background is average, as is the proportion of pupils and students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- A high proportion of pupils are identified as having SEN and/or disabilities.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision run by the local authority for all or part of the week.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to a total of 27 lessons in order to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited tutor times and observed pupils' conduct around the site at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the interim principal, senior leaders, the chair and members of the governing body, middle leaders, teachers and a representative of The Howard Academy Trust which has recently been supporting the school.
- Pupils' and students' views were gathered from formal meetings with groups of them and conversations around the school site.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation. This included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents, information about pupils' progress and standards, the school's website, minutes of governors' meetings, records of behaviour and attendance information and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 48 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, surveys returned by 65 pupils and 27 questionnaires returned by staff.

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