

Energy Coast UTC

Blackwood Road, Lillyhall, Workington, Cumbria CA14 4JW

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Working with the principal, governors have created a highly positive school ethos which raises pupils' aspirations to be the best they can be. The encouraging, professional and supportive culture of the school now enables the vast majority of pupils to achieve very well. They catch up with any learning they may have missed at their previous school.
- The principal has systematically and very skilfully developed high-quality leadership skills in all school leaders and managers. The school's senior leadership team has ensured that all aspects of the school have improved considerably and rapidly.
- Many pupils start at this school disillusioned with what they have achieved in their key stage 3 education at other schools. Some are resentful about schooling. Through excellent support and guidance, staff transform the negative attitudes of these pupils in a remarkably short period of time.
- Around the school and in lessons there is a sense that pupils are happy. They are mature and respectful. They are generally confident that, with the support of the school, they will succeed in attaining their aspirational ambitions.
- Pupils make excellent progress across key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- The school has worked very hard and successfully to meet the principles of a University Technical College (UTC). Pupils receive an excellent technical education. They take part in meaningful and wide-ranging academic and work-related learning activities with national and international companies who work locally.
- Much of the curriculum focuses on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Leaders ensure that there is balance in the curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted to a high standard.
- Almost all of those who complete their studies at the end of the sixth form excel in securing highly valued opportunities in employment and further training.
- Some pupils attended their previous schools very infrequently. This school has been highly successful in improving the attendance of the majority of these pupils. However, some still have rates of absence that are too high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the attendance of all pupils and most particularly that of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the last inspection, the principal, very ably supported by her leadership team and governors, has ensured that the school has improved significantly and rapidly. All aspects of the school are outstanding.
- The principal has given opportunities and support to staff to develop their leadership skills. Many have excelled and those are now the key staff who are daily maintaining the excellent standards of the school and making further improvement.
- The dedication of the principal to improving the quality of education while also reducing a significant inherited financial deficit is wholly commendable. Further to this, the principal has secured, in principle, the necessary funding for a large planned extension to the school buildings, equipment and resources.
- All areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed fully and quickly. The UTC's leadership team has a proven record of making demonstrable improvements throughout the school and has excellent capacity to lead the school to new heights.
- The quality of teaching has improved rapidly because those responsible for leading teacher improvement are talented and have very high standards and expectations. They are analytical and can identify precisely what teachers need to do to improve. Leaders effectively challenge any weaknesses and support staff in improving. They provide all staff with very effective professional development.
- Consistent with the principles of UTCs, the school's curriculum is specialised and focuses heavily on STEM subjects. Leaders are well aware that pupils need a broad education and provide, within the UTC context, a good range of other subjects, including humanities and physical education. Pupils receive an excellent education in English.
- For a small number of courses, the UTC uses partner training providers. They provide accommodation, teachers and facilities. UTC leaders monitor the quality of this provision closely and ensure that these providers strive to match the high expectations that exist for school-based provision.
- The timetabled curriculum is supplemented with an extensive and diverse range of other opportunities which develop pupils' employability skills and promote their personal development. Much use is made of visiting speakers and the school ensures that they represent a diverse range of backgrounds. Pupils take part in many educational visits to cities, where they visit universities, employers, cultural events and a variety of places of worship. There they discuss their views with religious leaders and gain a good insight into a range of beliefs. They integrate with each other and with adults confidently. They have high moral standards and high expectations of the way they want to lead their lives. A comprehensive personal, social, health and economic programme further broadens their leaning and equips them to live healthily, safely, productively and responsibly.
- Both academic and emotional support provided by the school are outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported and

excellent use is made of the additional funding these pupils attract. The needs of disadvantaged pupils are similarly well understood and the school, very effectively, breaks down barriers these pupils may have to achieving well.

- Leaders have quickly developed high-quality skills in analysing and evaluating the quality of the school's work. This enables them to have a very accurate view of the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement and personal development. It also enables senior leaders to identify what needs to improve. The termly visits made by an adviser commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) have been very helpful to the school, enabling senior leaders to reflect critically on the effect of strategies to improve the school and to decide on future developments.

Governance of the school

- Governors have played an instrumental role in improving this school both significantly and rapidly. Collectively, they provide a high level of strategic challenge and guidance to leaders.
- Governors have a very clear understanding of the considerable strengths of the school. They are proud to be associated with the UTC. They are highly complimentary about the capacity of the principal and the senior leadership team. They are also very well aware of the aspects of this school that they would like to see improving. They are entirely conversant with the negotiations and actions that are ahead of them if they are to resolve the inherited financial deficit fully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The very caring ethos that is demonstrated so clearly by staff is infectious and pupils show very high levels of care for each other. Pupils have high moral standards and expectations of the way they and other pupils should be treated. Consequently, they are prepared to speak out when they perceive an injustice or concern. This culture is one of the key factors that support strong safeguarding procedures.
- Leaders ensure that the school is a safe environment in which to learn. Pupils feel safe. Key staff have considerable expertise and safeguarding procedures are highly effective. All staff are well trained to respond to concerns that they may have about a pupil and know how to respond should a pupil disclose information to them.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote safety through teaching pupils how to identify and deal with potential dangers. This includes when using social media, when out and about in their communities and when at home.
- The school reviews the effectiveness of safeguarding frequently. This includes reviewing the safety procedures of partner providers, of alternative education providers and provision for absentee pupils. Leaders use this information to improve already robust systems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Leaders promote a consistent culture of high aspiration, high-quality teaching and support and very positive attitudes throughout the UTC. Teachers maintain these standards. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils will confidently discuss their ideas and ask for further explanations when they do not fully understand an unfamiliar concept. They are keen to contribute and work responsibly and enthusiastically.
- Teachers have detailed knowledge of their subjects and qualification requirements. They also understand fully what their pupils already know and can do. They use this knowledge to plan learning activities that meet the needs of their pupils and ensure high levels of pupil engagement.
- Teachers, no matter what their subject expertise, develop pupils' literacy skills through reading, discussion and developing key vocabulary. Pupils' numeracy skills are also systematically developed across all subjects where opportunities arise.
- Teachers comply with the school's policy on marking and giving feedback. Pupils respond very positively to this guidance. Teachers also comply with the school's expectations on providing homework. Pupils benefit from these well-considered activities. Such is the positive culture for learning that many pupils will add to the work set by the teachers to deepen their knowledge or broaden it. Teachers provide very good support for pupils who fall behind due to absence or simply because they find a topic difficult.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils receive excellent support that helps them become confident, healthy, happy, positive and responsible young adults with a vision and career plan for their future. They feel valued and they also know they have genuine opportunities to enter rewarding careers.
- Many pupils need specialist or additional support and guidance to overcome barriers to their success. Within the school there are many highly skilled staff who know how to nurture young people to become independent and successful. In addition, the school has excellent links with external agencies that can give additional support. The partnership between school staff and external professionals ensures that all pupils are very well looked after.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development has a very high profile in this school. Leaders know that it is not enough for pupils to achieve academic success without also being well prepared to integrate effectively in the workplace. The school is highly successful in fully preparing young people for their future lives.
- The curriculum includes extensive opportunities for pupils to learn how to be safe in a very wide range of circumstances. Health and safety in the workplace are taught as a fundamental aspect of developing pupils' employability skills. In addition, pupils learn

how to keep themselves healthy in all environments and circumstances in which they may find themselves.

- Complex issues that confront young people are highlighted and discussed throughout the school and extensively throughout the school's curriculum and enrichment programme. Pupils are expected to think deeply about their ideas and express them. Topics, including extremism, a person's sexual identity and social justice, are discussed maturely.
- The very few pupils that attend alternative provision do so with the intention of their returning to full-time education at the UTC. The school works closely with these providers, monitoring pupils' progress, welfare and personal development. These pupils benefit considerably from this highly specialised support.
- Many pupils say they experienced bullying in their previous secondary schools. However, they also say that they have had no experience of it in this school. Staff are very well trained and sufficiently experienced to recognise early signs of bullying and to respond to these quickly.
- The small number of pupils admitted to the UTC at the start of their Year 9 are extremely well looked after and supported in achieving very well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Staff blend excellent support with encouraging pupils to have a belief in themselves. Pupils know that, if they take the opportunities the UTC offers them, they will go on to secure high-quality and interesting employment. Almost all pupils commit themselves to learning successfully and developing the skills they will need to become valuable employees and members of their communities. Consequently, the school is a calm, orderly and harmonious place. Pupils socialise very well, and their relationships are excellent. Pupils study independently around the numerous tables and work stations available for self-study.
- The belief pupils have that they will succeed inspires them to have highly positive attitudes to learning and working. They contribute to classes enthusiastically and are very responsive to teachers' guidance and encouragement.
- The majority of pupils joining the school at the start of Year 10 have had an unsuccessful experience of secondary schools. As well as underachieving throughout key stage 3, some of these pupils have displayed episodes of disruptive behaviour and, in their previous schools, developed high levels of school absence. By the end of Year 10, the vast majority of pupils behave very well because they now have ambition and belief that they can achieve. Firstly, staff help pupils to understand their patterns of behaviour. Then they show them how they can manage this behaviour. However, the school still, on occasion, has to resort to the use of exclusion, but this sanction is now used sparingly.
- Published attendance figures conceal the real story of the school's considerable success in quickly improving the attendance of pupils in key stage 4. The majority of pupils who had been persistent absentees attend well by the end of Year 10. This happens because pupils begin to feel valued and realise that it is very worthwhile to attend. For

most, the school helps these pupils to break the habit of non-attendance. The published attendance information also hides the high number of pupils who attend this UTC and who have medical conditions that necessitate time away from school. The school goes to considerable lengths to help pupils catch up with any learning they may have missed due to low attendance. There are still, however, improvements that can be made to pupils' attendance.

- Pupils are punctual when arriving at school and when moving to lessons. They are fully aware that punctuality is an important consideration when employers are seeking to appoint.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Published information about how well pupils achieve in secondary schools measures progress from the start of Year 7 to the end of year 11. Since pupils have historically started this school at the start of Year 10, using published information to evaluate the quality of learning would be misleading. Pupils have had less than half of their secondary education at the UTC.
- School leaders use nationally recognised testing to establish pupils' attainment on entry to the school. This information shows that the majority of pupils have made poor progress in key stage 3. As a result, leaders expect pupils to make much more progress in key stage 4 at the UTC than they would in other schools. The UTC ensures that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, catch up quickly with learning that they have missed earlier in their schooling. Pupils are well on their way to fulfilling their potential.
- Pupils, from a wide range of starting points, make excellent progress across all subjects. However, the progress they make in English and vocational subjects is particularly strong. They join the school with very variable knowledge and understanding of mathematics. So, teachers have a difficult challenge to fill the gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge while also covering the key stage 4 curriculum. Good teaching and curriculum planning ensure that, by the end of Year 11, pupils are generally very competent mathematicians.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their different starting points. Pupils whose attendance falls below average due to medical needs are also given highly effective support so that their achievement remains high.
- The specific needs of disadvantaged pupils are clearly understood by teachers and school leaders. Support for them is excellent and these pupils too make excellent progress.
- The school's culture engenders in pupils very positive attitudes to learning. By the end of Year 11, pupils are literate and numerate. They have had first-rate careers guidance and many excellent opportunities to develop high-quality skills, which makes them very employable. They have experienced a broad curriculum, including cultural and moral development. They develop a very clear understanding of how they can contribute to Britain's engineering economy and integrate with a diverse community. Pupils leaving the UTC are exceptionally well prepared for their next stages in education, employment and training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leaders and managers have been highly successful in ensuring that the principles of the 16 to 19 study programmes are fully met. Students receive a broad and balanced curriculum. The principal and her senior leadership team ensure that sixth-form students have extensive opportunities to gain new experiences. For example, civil engineering students go on outward-bounds trips in the Lake District to develop employment-related skills such as team working, problem solving, critical thinking and project management skills.
- The principal and the governing body have been very successful in recruiting a highly motivated, ambitious and dedicated group of course leaders. They have been very effective in ensuring that their high aspirations are consistently implemented. This has resulted in a very high proportion of sixth-form students making excellent progress in their studies.
- Leaders, managers and teachers have worked tirelessly to ensure that students are given the very best opportunities to succeed. They very effectively use students' starting points at the beginning of their course to plan a curriculum that enables them to reach their potential. Through very effective teaching strategies which meet the needs of students, more than half make excellent progress in their studies and surpass their aspirational target grades.
- From a range of different starting points, students continue to make strong progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are outstanding. Managers ensure that students at the school receive highly appropriate and effective guidance to support their transition to their intended destinations. Almost all students who leave the school progress to an apprenticeship. Students rightly praise leaders, managers and teachers for the opportunities that they have benefited from as a direct result of their experiences at this UTC. Almost all students who leave the UTC after Year 12 do so because they have been offered a high-quality job opportunity. Almost no students leave Year 12 without a good destination.
- Leaders, managers and other staff have nurtured very effective relationships with a range of high-profile employers in the region. The employers and the UTC have developed excellent work placement programmes that enthuse and engage students in STEM careers. Consequently, almost all students who leave the school at the end of Year 13 progress to STEM-related apprenticeships in the local community.
- Local employers and the UTC have developed a range of very effective work-related projects that students complete. For example, engineering students recently completed a 14-week activity to develop a steam-generation station. This project allowed them to hone their skills in project management, building inspection, risk assessment, computer-aided design and materials analysis. This work was concluded by teams presenting their projects to a range of senior company executives for their feedback.
- Students recognise the value of the excellent teaching they receive and the outstanding range of opportunities they experience through direct and meaningful contact with major employers. Their desire to benefit from this provision is reflected in their highly positive attitudes to learning.

- The school's aim to meet the current and growing skills demand from regional employers working in the rapidly expanding energy sector has been fully achieved. Students make outstanding progress in their studies, with almost all progressing to apprenticeships in STEM disciplines.

School details

Unique reference number	140600
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10087868

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

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	278
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Stephens
Principal	Cherry Tingle
Telephone number	01900 606 446
Website	www.energycoastuttc.co.uk/
Email address	enquiries@energycoastuttc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 February 2017

Information about this school

- University technical colleges (UTCs) are usually smaller than the average-sized schools for 14- to 19-year-olds. They focus heavily, but not exclusively, on STEM subjects. All their technical, academic and practical learning is designed to be applied in the workplace. A UTC's specialism usually reflects the local economy. Energy Coast UTC specialises in engineering.
- After an early period of high staff turnover, staffing is now stable. The principal has been in post since September 2016.

- In September 2017, the UTC started to enrol 20 Year 9 pupils per year into its key stage 4 provision.
- The college works with two partner training providers who offer engineering and construction courses. They are Gen2 and the Lakes College.
- Three pupils attend either full-time or part-time alternative provision at the Lakes College or at West Cumbria Learning Centre.
- The college is formally supported by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, whose focus is on promoting and supporting new and existing university technical colleges.
- The school has received support, in the form of termly monitoring visits, from the DfE.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice principals and other school leaders.
- Inspectors also met with groups of pupils and four members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with groups of teachers.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the Baker Dearing Trust and an adviser commissioned by the DfE.
- School 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.
- One inspector visited a partner training provider.
- Inspectors examined child protection information.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the views of the 24 parents and carers who texted their comments to the inspection team. There were no responses to pupils' or staff inspection surveys.

Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Cocker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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