

# Inspection of North East Futures UTC

Stephenson Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3AS

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Sixth-form provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have a clear vision for a high-quality technical education for all pupils who attend North East Futures UTC. They have developed a curriculum with a specialist focus on science and computing. Staff have clear expectations for how pupils should behave. However, pupils do not always meet these expectations, especially those in the younger year groups. Staff expectations of what pupils might achieve are not consistently high enough, including of those in the sixth form. Consequently, the ambitious vision of leaders is not being realised throughout the school.

Pupils feel safe at school. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils' well-being is a priority for staff. Students who join the sixth form are welcomed into the school community. However, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means they miss out on important learning over time. Leaders' actions to improve attendance have had little impact on some groups of pupils.

Leaders have established strong links with local businesses. 'Project Days' provide valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in workshops led by local companies. Visiting speakers provide aspirational careers talks to inspire pupils. Students in the sixth form receive support from a business mentor. This helps them to make important decisions about their future.

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

Leaders do not have a full understanding of the strengths and areas that require improvement at the school. Processes for quality assuring teaching, assessment and pupils' personal development lack precision. This means that leaders' priorities for improvement are not as well considered as they might be. Governors have a strong vision for the education they expect pupils to receive at the UTC. However, the information they receive on important aspects of school performance is not sufficiently accurate. This limits how well governors can support and challenge school leaders.

Lessons in most subjects follow a clearly defined curriculum. This means that some pupils build a clear understanding of how different topics connect to one another. However, pupils' learning varies across the school. Some staff do not consider what pupils already know and can do when planning new learning. This means pupils' progress is not as strong as it might be.

Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have previously learned. This is a feature of many lessons and helps pupils to remember more. However, in other lessons, recall tasks are not used effectively. Sometimes, staff do not carefully consider the questions they ask. As a result, pupils do not fully understand their learning. Staff explain new vocabulary well, particularly in the sixth form, where new content is often challenging.

Leaders have considered the knowledge they want pupils to learn as part of the curriculum. However, some teachers do not use assessment well to identify what pupils have understood and remembered. This contributes to gaps in pupils' learning. Many pupils do not make appropriate improvements to their work following feedback from staff. This has a negative impact on their learning over time.

Reading is becoming an important focus for leaders. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read get additional support. This has helped several pupils on the programme. However, this support is not as effective as it might be because staff are not fully trained. Leaders have begun to help pupils develop a love of reading across the school. They have created a small school library and ensured reading sessions happen weekly in tutor time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported at the school. Plans to assist their learning have specific targets. Leaders regularly review these plans to ensure they meet each pupils' needs. Staff understand how to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. All pupils have access to the same ambitious curriculum. However, pupils with SEND often have lower attendance than their peers. This means they do not benefit from the support on offer at the school.

Leaders have planned a personal development curriculum at key stage 4 that covers a number of important topics. These include fundamental British values, money management and healthy relationships. However, the personal development curriculum in the sixth form is too narrow. Students in Year 13 have clear ambitions for the next stage in their education but lack an understanding of the wider world. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of others' differences. However, their knowledge of these differences is weak. This means pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

Careers education is a strength of the school. All pupils receive independent careers advice and guidance. Pupils in Year 10 and students in Year 12 take part in work experience placements. They value these opportunities immensely. In recent years, 100% of pupils have gone on to further education, employment or training after Year 13. Many students in the sixth form choose courses or careers in computing or healthcare, the two specialisms of the UTC.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have carefully considered the specific risks to pupils at the UTC. Staff receive appropriate training to understand these risks. Pupils also receive important messages about how to stay safe online and in person. This includes regular assemblies and work in tutor time. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils get additional support. This includes pupils who do not attend as well as they might.

Leaders' records show they take appropriate action when a pupil may be at risk of harm. They work well with parents and external agencies to keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that there is effective mental health support for pupils who might need it.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Teachers do not carefully consider what pupils already know and can do when planning lessons. This means that some pupils do not receive the support they need, while others are not sufficiently challenged. This limits the progress pupils make. Leaders should develop staff knowledge, skills and understanding to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively in all subjects.
- Assessment is not used consistently across the school. Sometimes, staff do not ask questions that help them to identify and address pupils' misconceptions. Feedback from staff is often vague or unhelpful. This means that pupils' knowledge is not developing well over time. Leaders should ensure that a consistent approach to assessment is implemented across the school and that they monitor the impact of this work on pupils' progress.
- Rates of attendance are not high enough. Leaders' actions have had a limited impact on improving attendance over time, including for students in the sixth form. This means some pupils regularly miss out on learning. Leaders should review their approach to improving attendance in order to ensure that it has a rapid and sustained impact on improving attendance across the school.
- A broad and balanced personal development curriculum is not in place in all year groups. Pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is weak. Work to promote pupils' wider skills and interests is not of a high enough quality. Leaders should ensure that a carefully planned programme to promote pupils' personal development is implemented in both key stage 4 and key stage 5.
- Leaders do not have a precise understanding of the areas for development within the school. This means that suitably ambitious school improvement priorities are not in place. Leaders should review their self-evaluation procedures to ensure that they provide an accurate overview of what the school does well and what it needs to improve.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145900
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255581
<b>Type of school</b>	Technical
<b>School category</b>	University technical college
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	320
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Les Watson
<b>Principal</b>	Daniel Sydes-Danvers
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nefuturesutc.co.uk">www.nefuturesutc.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a university technical college. It provides technical education for pupils aged 14 to 19.
- The school is sponsored by partner organisations. At the time of the inspections, its major partners were Accenture, Dynamo, the NHS, Sage, Ubisoft, AHSN and Sunderland University.
- The school opened in September 2018 and is part of the Tyne Coast Academy Trust.
- The school uses five providers of alternative education. One of these is not registered with the department for education.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the local governing body. The lead inspector met with the deputy chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from partner organisations, including those who form part of the local governing board.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, science, mathematics and computing. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders of the sixth form and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. They examined the schools' behaviour records, spoke to pupils who had been subject to sanctions and spoke with providers of alternative education.
- Inspectors met with the SEND coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come on to the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

## Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jessica McKay	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Frear	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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