

Inspection of Energy Coast UTC

Blackwood Road, Lillyhall, Workington, Cumbria CA14 4JW

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

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

This school was last inspected four years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Energy Coast UTC is a welcoming and nurturing place for pupils to learn. Pupils are happy here. They told inspectors that they are treated as individuals and they can be themselves. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Typically, pupils achieve well. Students in the sixth form also learn well.

Pupils enjoy learning in well-equipped engineering suites. They take part in high-quality work experience with prestigious employers. Most students successfully move on to education, employment or training, including apprenticeships.

Pupils are polite and friendly. They enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. Pupils behave in a calm and respectful way in class and around the school site. Students in the sixth form behave very well.

Pupils feel safe. They know that staff will listen and help them if they are worried about anything. On the very rare occasions on which bullying occurs, leaders deal with it effectively.

Pupils benefit from a vast array of activities that help them to develop their confidence, such as the Combined Cadet Force, sports clubs, visits and overseas trips. They enjoy participating in a range of clubs, including chess, robotics and green power car. Students in the sixth form value the opportunity to take on responsibilities, such as leading the charity and environmental societies.

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

Leaders, the CEO and governors are highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They enable pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals who are ready for the world of work. Leaders have developed an appropriate curriculum, including in the sixth form, that meets the needs of local employers in areas such as engineering and construction.

The published outcomes in 2022, relating to pupils' achievement, do not accurately reflect the quality of education that the school provides. This is because pupils join the school in Year 10 from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. For example, many pupils have experienced a disrupted education and have had poor rates of attendance in their previous schools. Consequently, some pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding when they start in Year 10. Nevertheless, leaders ensure that pupils have an effective transition from their previous schools into Energy Coast UTC. This timely support helps pupils to settle quickly into their studies, and most learn well.

Leaders have improved the organisation of subject curriculums. They have identified the knowledge that pupils must learn and have thought carefully about the order in

which this knowledge should be taught. Most pupils and students develop an appropriate range of specialist subject knowledge.

Teachers skilfully use their specialist subject knowledge, including that of industry, to present and explain information clearly to pupils. This helps pupils to deepen their learning. However, in some subjects, teachers do not use leaders' assessment systems effectively enough to identify some of the gaps in pupils' subject knowledge. Some teachers do not use this information as well as they could to inform future learning. At times, this hinders some aspects of pupils' achievement. This includes some students in the sixth form.

Reading is promoted well throughout the school. Leaders accurately identify pupils who need extra help with their reading knowledge. Those pupils who find reading more difficult receive appropriate support from staff. This is helping pupils to catch up with their reading knowledge. Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to read each week. This is enabling pupils to develop their confidence and fluency in reading.

The small number of pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify the needs of these pupils swiftly. Leaders have improved the level of information they provide to teachers about the additional learning needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers use this information well to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met. This is helping pupils with SEND to learn more as they move through the school.

Leaders work closely with pupils when they enter Year 10 to manage their emotions. Those pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour get the additional support they need. As a result, instances of poor behaviour, including suspensions and exclusions, are reducing quickly. In lessons, pupils concentrate well because lessons are rarely disrupted. Leaders' actions to raise overall rates of attendance have led to improvements for some pupils. However, there is a small number of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. Consequently, these pupils miss out on essential learning.

Staff provide a range of support for pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils and students receive age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education. They learn about respect for people's differences. Pupils find out about different faiths and beliefs. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, speak highly of the careers guidance they receive. This includes learning about apprenticeships and participating in well-designed visits to employers and universities. This allows pupils to make informed choices about their future career pathways. Some students who leave the school after Year 12 do so because they have been offered a high-quality job opportunity.

Leaders are mindful of staff's workload. Staff enjoy working at the school and appreciate the training available to them. Governors are knowledgeable. They

support leaders well. Governors hold leaders to account effectively for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of vigilance in the school. All staff and governors have completed training in safeguarding. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders are tenacious in following these up. Safeguarding records are detailed. Leaders have ensured that there are very effective links with a range of external agencies, such as local social services and the police, to support and protect pupils. Pupils and students are taught about risks, such as county lines, knife crime and unwanted sexual behaviour. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, teachers do not check carefully enough how well pupils, including students in the sixth form, have learned new subject content. As a result, some teachers do not reshape learning as well as they could to help pupils and students improve their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that teachers accurately identify and address gaps in the knowledge of pupils and students so that they know and remember more over time.
- A few pupils do not attend school as often as they should. They miss valuable learning time, which negatively impacts on their achievement. Leaders should continue to support these pupils to improve their attendance.

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

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| Unique reference number | 140600 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10265424 |
| Type of school | Technical |
| School category | University technical college |
| Age range of pupils | 14 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 376 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 107 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Barbara Stephens |
| Acting Principal | Kerryann Wilson |
| Website | www.energycoastuttc.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 and 6 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Energy Coast UTC specialises in engineering. The school is sponsored by the University of Cumbria. The school offers vocational pathways, supplemented by core subjects and other academic subjects. Leaders work closely with a range of employers to provide vocational opportunities for pupils and students in the sixth form.
- This school is part of a single academy trust.
- There have been a number of changes to leadership and staffing in recent years. The acting principal was appointed in October 2022. Prior to this, she was the vice principal.
- Leaders make use of three registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the acting principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with the CEO of the trust and a group of trustees, including the chair of the trust board. Inspectors held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and representatives from local employers.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and students about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils and students during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the single central record. They met with leaders, staff, pupils and students to check how effective safeguarding procedures are in the school. An inspector held telephone calls with representatives from alternative providers.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plan, minutes of governor meetings, records of pupils' and students' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in business studies, English, engineering, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils and students about their learning, and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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