

UTC Portsmouth

URN: 143430 | Inspected: 18 November 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils progress through the curriculum extremely well. They are very well prepared to go on to sustained and extremely ambitious destinations when they leave school. When they join the school, most pupils have not achieved well previously. Published data does not, therefore, fully reflect pupils' progress. However, pupils' attainment is above national and local averages over time, even though they have only sometimes been at the school for two years. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics, which supports their learning strongly in other subjects. Although disadvantaged pupils' attainment dipped in 2024, leaders' effective actions mean that they are now achieving well and gaps are closing rapidly. In post-16 provision, leaders have had a clear impact on improving students' outcomes. Some post-16 students achieve very highly indeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve at least as well as other pupils in the school and benefit greatly from the support that they receive.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

The highly ambitious curriculum has a core and substantial focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It is designed effectively by leaders to furnish pupils with the deep knowledge and skills required to support pupils' high aspirations. Leaders review and revise the curriculum in liaison with a wide range of employers and higher education partners to ensure that it meets the current economic and academic requirements of the STEM sector. Leaders have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching, taking the right action to make any improvements required. They provide highly effective training for staff. Teachers demonstrate highly developed, and at times expert, subject knowledge, which makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils have a detailed understanding about how secure they are in different aspects of their learning and what they need to improve. Teachers address these areas swiftly, which has a very positive impact on pupils' progress through the curriculum. Teachers adapt teaching very effectively to help pupils overcome gaps in their knowledge and basic skills. Pupils are adept at studying independently, developing essential skills to support their learning later in life. Teachers develop pupils' language and communication skills really well.

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Inclusion

Strong standard

All pupils follow the full curriculum, regardless of any barriers to learning or vulnerabilities that they might have. The school is, understandably, very popular, but applications do not rely on previous academic outcomes. Leaders and staff identify individual pupils' needs quickly when they join the school in Year 10 or Year 12, reviewing them carefully and making sure that the right effective support is in place to ensure that pupils succeed. The school takes a precise and bespoke approach to supporting each pupil's needs, working with external professionals when necessary. Leaders use additional funding effectively so that pupils who are disadvantaged achieve well, as do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders communicate pupils' additional needs effectively to staff. Staff use this information to make sure that these needs are met. The school supports all pupils to develop very positive attitudes to learning and high levels of engagement, especially where these may have been issues when pupils joined the school. Pupils are able to tackle challenging tasks with confidence. Leaders provide very effective training, which ensures that staff have the right skills and knowledge to support pupils. Leaders check that additional support for pupils has the right intended impact.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders and trustees set a highly ambitious vision for the school. They know the school's many strengths and what needs to be done to improve it further, taking effective action when necessary. Leaders have pupils' best interests firmly at the centre of all of their decisions. They seek to make sure that all pupils flourish and thrive, academically and personally. This aim is realised in practice, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have successfully reduced achievement gaps for disadvantaged pupils and are, rightly, focused fully on eliminating them completely. Leaders are refining further the school's excellent approach to supporting pupils into sustained and successful future destinations when they leave the school. Leaders are united in these efforts. They share aspects of the school's highly effective practice nationally. Staff are highly motivated. Leaders engage with staff very productively to seek their views and act on their feedback. Leaders take a careful approach to managing staff's workload, keeping pupils at the core of considerations while ensuring staff achieve a very healthy balance between work and their personal lives. Leaders provide a wide range of appropriate and innovative training for staff, which makes a significant contribution to their work with pupils. Trustees are highly skilled and have very relevant experience. This shines through in the way that they manage the strategic direction of the school and meet all statutory requirements. They are firmly focused on achieving high ambitions and on continually driving for further improvements to extend the school's transformative impact on pupils' lives.

Post 16 provision Strong standard Students benefit greatly from a carefully designed, tailored and relevant curriculum. Although A-level results in 2024 were not high overall, some students achieved very well indeed. Students' attainment in vocational and technical qualifications was stronger. Leaders identified the issues quickly and their subsequent effective actions mean that students are currently achieving well, with some producing

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excellent work. All pupils achieve high-quality places either at universities, or on higher-level apprenticeships or in employment. Around 90% of students are accepted into their first-choice universities, and nearly a third go to Russell Group universities. Teachers use their high levels of expertise to extend and deepen students' learning very effectively. Staff know about the specific needs of individual vulnerable students and meet these fully. Disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress very well through the curriculum. Students engage fully with the very wide range of enrichment activities. Provision for their personal development is a particular strength. For example, a large proportion of students participate in the Turing Scheme, which involves them studying, working or volunteering abroad. Support for students' wellbeing is very effective. Students are happy, ambitious and highly motivated.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school makes a significantly positive contribution to pupils' lives. Staff and leaders instil very high aspirations quickly in all pupils when they join, either in Year 10 or Year 12. The school's tangible culture of respect, ambition and high levels of commitment is built on pupils' very positive relationships with each other and with staff. The school's central focus is, rightly, on ensuring that pupils secure high-quality training, education and employment in the future when they leave the school. There is an ethos of professionalism that prepares pupils very effectively for their subsequent education and careers. Pupils gain the skills, knowledge and personal traits to enable them to flourish. One pupil, reflective of many, said, 'The whole place is geared towards helping us to succeed and go on to realise our dreams.' Pupils' personal development is superb. Pupils are extremely engaged in their learning and are very motivated. They rightly recognise and value the high-quality provision that the school makes for them. Pupils develop independence. They are mature young people focused on achieving highly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Pupils make a significant contribution to school life. They enjoy the very wide range of excellent enrichment activities that extend and really deepen their experiences and learning. Leaders' and staff's expectations of pupils are high, both in terms of behaviour and their achievement. Pupils rise to these expectations admirably. Barriers to learning are expertly reduced so that pupils progress very well through the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils thrive. Pupils feel safe and trust adults with any concerns or worries that they might have, knowing that staff will address these effectively and swiftly. Any unkindness is incredibly rare. Staff support pupils' wellbeing fully. Pupils want to be in school and attend regularly. They are incredibly proud to be members of the school.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain their work to ensure continued improvement and high standards. They should focus on creating a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

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Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils value their education greatly. Current attendance rates are, therefore, high. Rates of pupils' absence over recent years have been below or close to national averages, with persistent absence below average. Effective, robust systems are in place to check and follow up on any pupil absence swiftly every day. Leaders' well-chosen strategies have a clearly positive impact on improving pupils' overall attendance. Staff use a range of approaches to support individual pupils into school, which have a significant impact. These pupils often have had a history of previously low attendance before they join the school. Pupils behave superbly. Relationships around the school create an ethos of professionalism and pride. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other and completely commit to the ethos of a professional learning environment that operates using industry standards and expectations. There is no derogatory behaviour or discrimination, including online. Pupils work and socialise together extremely well. Staff use rewards and consequences appropriately and consistently, underpinned by the school's 'science, technology, engineering and mathematics habits of mind'. Pupils rightly trust staff to deal with any concerns effectively. Leaders support any pupils with specific needs really well so that these pupils' behaviour improves very rapidly.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/utc-portsmouth-portsmouth>