

Inspection of Corby Technical School

Cottingham Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1TD

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Angela Reynolds. The school is part of the Brooke Weston Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by chief executive officer (CEO), Dr Andrew Campbell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Morrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

Corby Technical School is a welcoming, inclusive school. Teachers develop strong relationships with pupils. Pupils feel safe and say they trust staff to provide support when they need it. Pupils are known to staff by name. Teachers work hard to provide a rich curriculum to broaden their horizons. The school ensures that each pupil is well prepared for the next steps. Pupils appreciate the work of the school to make them the 'most employable in Corby'.

The school has high expectations of all pupils. Staff and pupils share an aspirational culture. The school's priority to improve academic outcomes is being realised across the curriculum.

A strong emphasis is placed on attendance. Pupils behave and attend well. They move around the site sensibly and are polite. Bullying is rare and pupils feel confident that staff quickly sort it out when it does occur.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate in clubs to develop their interests, for example in sport, cooking and creative and performing arts. Pupils are proud to secure silver or gold in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme or represent the Combined Cadet Force. Sixth-form students embrace leadership opportunities, including the delivery of assembly and leading committees.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum to build pupils' academic knowledge over time. The curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, employment or training. Explicit links are made between the skills that the curriculum develops and potential careers. In key stage 3, pupils study a full range of subjects. Staff know pupils well and use this knowledge to guide pupils in choosing their pathways. In key stages 4 and 5, pupils select from a broad range of options which support their career aspirations.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their needs are quickly identified and communicated clearly to staff through 'pupil passports'. Pupils who need additional help are well-supported, for example through small groups to develop literacy and numeracy.

The school ensures that all pupils are taught by subject specialists. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In many subjects, teachers explain clearly, check pupils' understanding and identify possible misconceptions. In these subjects, pupils respond well to questioning and effective feedback. They produce high-quality work.

Occasionally, teaching is not as effective. On these occasions, explanations are not always clear, and teachers do not check pupils' understanding well. When this happens, some pupils do not fully commit to their learning and their knowledge is not deepened as a result.

The school has prioritised reading. It identifies pupils who need support early. A range of interventions improves these pupils' reading. These include specialist support with phonics and sixth-form students listening to younger readers. Pupils make regular use of the well-stocked library. The school checks that pupils become confident readers.

In the sixth form, staff provide students with personalised academic and pastoral support. Students feel well prepared for the next stage. Many go on to aspirational destinations, including universities and apprenticeships. Examples of the extensive development programme include students leading culture and diversity events, in addition to some school communications.

The school has set high expectations for pupils' conduct. Staff model and reinforce this well by directing pupils to 'move with purpose'. The school has considered how they teach good behaviour and provides pupils with opportunities to practise it. The selective use of the 'ambition centre' and 'reflection room' ensures that learning is not disrupted. These approaches support pupils well. The school has developed a strong team, which supports pupils to attend well.

The school's promotion of pupils' wider development is a real strength. Pupils learn about age-appropriate consent, online safety and healthy relationships. Students appreciate these lessons. The school's drive for inclusion ensures that pupils learn about different cultures, characteristics and beliefs and how to respect these. A comprehensive careers provision ensures that all pupils benefit from personalised guidance, for example through interviews, a careers fair and meeting many local employers.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They unite to support the school's culture of aspiration. They appreciate the work of leaders to reduce workload and support their well-being. Some staff have benefited from opportunities to develop their expertise and leadership both within the school and across the wider trust. Trust leaders, trustees and governors know the school well. They exercise their statutory duties. They strive to provide continued support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always routinely check for pupils' understanding or provide effective feedback. This means that pupils do not learn new knowledge consistently across the curriculum. The school must ensure that feedback to pupils helps to improve their knowledge and understanding.

- Sometimes, learning activities are not delivered well. This means that pupils can be passive or opt out of activities. The school should ensure that lesson tasks engage and support pupils to commit to their learning. This will enable them to study more effectively.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138254
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347527
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	985
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	82
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Morrison
CEO of the trust	Andrew Campbell
Headteacher	Angela Reynolds
Website	www.corbytechnicalschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 April 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Brooke Weston Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons and evaluated pupils' work in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss behaviour, personal development, the provision for pupils with SEND, reading and support for disadvantaged pupils.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4 in addition to a group of students from key stage 5.
- The lead inspector met with trust leaders, trustees and governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes. An inspector spoke to the headteacher of the alternative provision used by this school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted parent View, including the free-text responses, and the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie McBrearty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Hobbs	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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