

# St Lawrence Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135674
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	361303
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	603
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bishop David Rossdale
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Joan Barnes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Doncaster Road Scunthorpe Lincolnshire DN15 7DF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 31 teachers, and held meetings with the Chair of Trustees, staff, and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 230 parents and carers, 115 students and 65 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How good is the quality of learning, progress and achievement?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and assessment?
- What is the impact of leaders at all levels in using self-evaluation and precisely targeted actions to drive improvement?

## Information about the school

The St Lawrence Academy opened in September 2008 and is sponsored by the Diocese of Lincoln. It is smaller than the average 11-16 secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Almost one third of students are from ethnic minority groups, which is above average. The school has specialisms in sports and science. The school has gained Investors in People, Healthy Workplace and Investing in Community Engagement awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The St Lawrence Academy is a popular and oversubscribed school with a highly positive working atmosphere in which students are keen to learn and do well. Students are very proud of their academy and strongly committed to its values.

Many play a leadership role in developing the life and work of the academy. Students show outstanding commitment to, and engagement in, an extensive range of school and community activities. These opportunities, and the ethos of the academy, are contributing exceptionally well to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

Achievement is good. Attainment has risen significantly since the academy opened. In 2010, results rose markedly and reached national averages on all key measures. School data reliably anticipate a further increase in 2011. Students make outstanding progress on vocational courses. In other subjects the picture is more mixed. Students make good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English. School assessment and external test results show that Year 11 students are on track to make improved progress in English and mathematics in 2011. Attendance is consistently above the national average and is continuing to rise. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school and levels of exclusion are very low.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving. Most teaching is good or better. Assessment information is used well to set targets and monitor progress. However, in satisfactory teaching, teachers are not always using it to plan lessons that meet the differing needs of everyone in the class. The outstanding curriculum is flexible and extremely responsive to students' needs, aspirations, and interests. The taught curriculum and the enrichment curriculum have made a significant impact on students' achievement, attendance and personal development, and on the very low proportion of students aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment, or training. The care, guidance and support for vulnerable young people are outstanding and excellent guidance is provided at each stage of transition.

The outstanding Board of Trustees has been highly influential in the strategic development of the new academy and in promoting its ethos and faith character. The Principal successfully communicates high expectations and common values and has developed strong and shared commitment among staff and students. Leaders have made a significant impact in raising achievement and attendance and in promoting good behaviour. Leaders have developed a well-planned and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation and they take effective action to bring about improvement. However, the proportion of satisfactory teaching and learning has not been significantly reduced over the last year. The academy has recognised that observations carried out by staff should focus more sharply on the learning rather than the teaching. More urgency and drive is

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needed to improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. The leaders have a good capacity for further sustained improvement.

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

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
  - improving the use of assessment to ensure that teaching consistently matches the range of students' needs
  - giving a sharper focus to evaluating the learning in lessons as well as the teaching
  - tackling satisfactory teaching more rigorously in order to bring about more rapid improvement in the consistency of learning and progress, including in English.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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In 2010, almost all students taking vocational courses in sport, information and communication technology, construction, hospitality and performing arts gained at least a grade C at GCSE. Results in English and mathematics remain below average but are improving. There was a significant increase in the proportion of A\* to C grades in English in 2010. Early GCSE results in English and the results of module tests in mathematics indicate that in 2011 a higher proportion of students are on track to gain five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.

Students enter the academy with attainment which is below, and sometimes well below average; and they leave the academy with average attainment. This represents good progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and gain a wide range of accreditation.

Students have developed a positive attitude to learning which contributes to their improved progress. They are considerate of each other, behave well in discussions and listen attentively to opposing viewpoints. They enjoy the wide range of opportunities for practical activities and they regularly reflect on their learning and progress. Many students have developed confidence in speaking, for example, in giving a presentation to the class and asking the class questions. A few students lack skills in literacy which limits their progress. In a few lessons, students are too passive and do not have enough opportunity to work independently. On occasion, students carry out a task but it is not clear what precise skills they are developing.

Over one third of students, spread across all year groups, are actively engaged in leadership activities and as buddies and mentors. Prefects, house representatives and other leaders are impressive ambassadors for the school. Students are fully engaged in decision-making across the school. Their voice is prominent in celebrating achievement and promoting change and development. A high proportion of students contribute to the academy's on-line radio station and web-site.

Students feel safe in school and bullying is rare. Students from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds work very harmoniously together in lessons and enjoy each others' company in friendship groups. They learn much from the rich blend of cultures and religions represented in school. Students are encouraged well to reflect on right and

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wrong and the impact of their actions on others, including the 'thought for the week'. Many behave with a maturity that belies their years.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Most lessons are planned well and include a good range of activities to motivate students. Relationships between teachers and students are good. There is a good atmosphere for learning in lessons and students are confident when reading aloud in class or answering questions. The vast majority of lessons move at a lively pace. In the best lessons, questioning is used well to check understanding, to challenge thinking and to focus students' thinking. Regular checks are made throughout the lessons to make sure that all students understand the work and are making good progress. Teachers adapt their plans or try a different approach if necessary. Activities are cleverly designed to match the differing abilities in the class so that everyone is able make good or better progress. For example, the most able students in a French lesson had to write in the past tense whereas others used the present tense.

In the weaker lessons, everyone works on the same activity even though some of the weaker students are unable to complete the task and sit quietly pretending to get on with the work. Teachers in these lessons often talk too much and the students are passive. Teachers do not direct questions effectively and take answers from the same few volunteers.

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The tracking of students' progress is particularly effective in physical education (PE) and technology. Students are well informed about grade criteria and what they need to do to reach a higher level. Marking is generally good and there are examples of good practice in English. However, the use of assessment to plan lessons is inconsistent across subjects.

At Key Stage 4, there is a wide range of both academic and vocational courses, extended through the school's outstanding partnership with two local colleges. Students are able to choose courses that match their interests and ambitions. Vocational courses, taken by students of all abilities, are successful in providing a clear purpose to learning and linking with the world of work or further learning. The curriculum is greatly enriched by an extensive range of popular extra-curricular opportunities, including educational visits and residential experiences. For example, the Year 7 induction camp provides both memorable experiences for the students and highly successful team building outcomes.

An outstanding level of personalised guidance and support is provided for vulnerable students. Work with families and specialised health and social care services sustain the development and well-being of individual students. Rigorous monitoring and effective action has been successful in reducing poor attendance. Good attendance and behaviour are successfully promoted by rewards and celebration. Excellent care is taken to ensure that students move successfully from one stage to the next. Students have many opportunities to experience learning at the Academy prior to arrival in Year 7. In Year 9, choices are well informed by the opportunity to try out new courses. Students have excellent opportunities to experience post-16 education and training at local colleges prior to leaving the academy at the end of Year 11.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The Principal provides highly visible and positive leadership for staff and students. Systems of target setting and monitoring of students' progress provide students and their parents and carers with clear information about their progress and what they need to do to improve. Senior and middle leaders make effective use of data to identify underachievement and they are beginning to carry out increasingly detailed analysis of the skills needed to enable students to achieve the next step. Improved systems of monitoring and accountability have strengthened the role of middle leaders. The Board of Trustees provides a high level of expertise which is deployed exceptionally well to support and challenge the academy. The trustees have been instrumental in promoting strong partnerships with the community. The Board of Trustees is systematically involved in

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evaluating the progress of the academy and makes a valuable and professional contribution to monitoring areas for improvement.

A new and more rigorous lesson observation system was introduced in September 2010 and the findings have been used to plan and target staff training. Focus groups have been set up to work on particular priorities. Students are also involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning and have produced a video on what makes an outstanding lesson that teachers have found very helpful. Students have also been trained to observe lessons. Good practice is shared within clusters of subjects but is not shared effectively enough across the academy, which contributes to variations between subjects. The current lesson observation form does not focus sharply enough on students' learning and progress. Recruitment issues in English reduce the quality of teaching and students' progress in a few classes at Key Stage 3.

The quality of safeguarding is good. Policies, procedures and training are well-managed and regularly reviewed and updated. Relationships with parents and carers are highly positive. There is very close and effective contact with parents and carers of vulnerable students, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English. Most parents and carers attend student review meetings and they are very well-informed about their child's achievement and development. The outstanding promotion of equal opportunities is at the heart of the academy's work. All groups have improved their achievement. The role of student diversity leaders and religious education leaders is innovative and highly effective in promoting understanding between groups within school and in the wider community. Relationships within the school and with the local area are highly cohesive and are based on a high level of practical and sensitive engagement with religious, ethnic and social issues by trustees, staff and students.

Strong partnerships with two local colleges, and the extensive range of business links, provide excellent vocational opportunities for students. Links through the academy's specialism in sport are similarly strong, most notably with feeder primary schools, and with Scunthorpe United Football Club. Partnerships with a wide range of organisations have established the academy as focal point for the community and provide excellent opportunities for students' personal development and achievement.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

More than one third of parents and carers returned the parent and carer questionnaire, which is higher than average. Parents and carers have a very high opinion of the academy. In response to all questions their views are significantly more positive than at other academies and secondary schools. In comparison with other schools nationally, parents and carers are especially confident that their children enjoy school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Lawrence Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 230 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 603 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	91	40	125	54	10	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	105	46	119	52	1	0	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	119	52	104	45	3	1	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	41	120	52	14	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	92	40	128	56	8	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	77	33	133	58	15	7	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	28	142	62	18	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	99	43	116	50	6	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	35	137	60	6	3	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	34	125	54	15	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	30	133	58	13	6	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	86	37	128	56	7	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	106	46	110	48	6	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Lawrence Academy, Scunthorpe, DN15 7DF**

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is a good school. In the questionnaire that you completed most of you said that you learn a lot, get help on how to improve, and are well-prepared for the future.

These were the things we liked most about your school.

- Many of you impressively take on a wide range of leadership roles. You give a lot to the school and wider community and your opportunities for personal development are exceptional.
- Your achievement is good. Your results are improving in English and mathematics. You achieve exceptionally well on vocational courses.
- Teaching is good and you are keen to learn. The curriculum provides you with an excellent choice of courses.
- Those of you with particular needs get outstanding support from staff.

To help the school to improve, we have said that senior leaders should.

-Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:

- improving the use of assessment to ensure that teaching consistently matches the range of students' needs
- giving a sharper focus to evaluating the learning in lessons as well as the teaching
- tackling satisfactory teaching more rigorously in order to bring about more rapid improvement in the consistency of learning and progress, including in English.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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