

Lincoln Castle Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136537
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	382225
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Ashdown

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	815
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Dubut
Headteacher	Rob Boothroyd
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Riseholme Road Lincoln LN1 3SP
Telephone number	01522 529203
Fax number	01522 504007
Email address	enquiries@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons and saw 32 teachers teach. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and students. They observed the academy's work, and looked at students' books, safeguarding information, students' progress data and other documentation. They analysed 270 questionnaires from parents and carers and also others from students and staff.

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

- Whether all groups of students are making the progress of which they are capable, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of strategies to improve attainment and progress in mathematics and whether these are having sufficient impact quickly enough.
- The effectiveness of the academy's strategies to improve teaching and learning and assessment further, and whether these are consistently good across the academy.

Information about the school

This is a below average-sized school, which gained academy status in April 2011. It has specialist status for business and enterprise. An above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is that of students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The academy has gained several awards for its work with businesses, employers and industry and also holds Healthy Schools and International School status.

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

This is a good academy. Giving every student the chance to succeed is at the very heart of its work and, consequently, they are included particularly well in all school activities. The academy's good quality of care, guidance and support contributes well to students' good personal development. Students are punctual, behave well, are keen to contribute to their own and the wider community, and have a well-developed understanding of the world of work. Attainment is rising and progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is accelerating. The governing body, leaders and managers know their academy well, self-evaluation is accurate and appropriate priorities for further development have been identified clearly. Consequently, the academy has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

From below-average starting points when they enter the academy, students make good progress and achieve well as they move through both the main academy and the sixth form. In 2011, an impressive 95% of students attained five higher grade GCSE and equivalent passes. They attained particularly highly in a wide range of vocational courses, including business studies, where the positive impact of the academy's business and enterprise specialism can be seen clearly. In 2011, GCSE results in English were close to the national average, but those in mathematics were below the national average, partly because staffing turbulence in the predecessor school left a small legacy of underachievement. The academy has put in place a number of strategies to improve attainment and progress in mathematics and these are having a marked impact on improving outcomes for students. Consequently, current students are making good progress and the academy's rigorous monitoring systems indicate that they are on track to reach their challenging targets this year.

Students make good progress because teaching and learning are good and because the curriculum they follow provides courses which interest them and allow them to succeed. Teachers explain their subjects clearly and use a range of interesting resources to engage the students' interest. The majority of lessons are briskly paced, teachers have high expectations of the students and work is suitably challenging. However, in some lessons, the pace of learning slows when work is not sufficiently challenging and matched well to student's needs, or when students are not given sufficient time to learn independently and work out things for themselves. Work is marked regularly, but feedback to students is not always of sufficiently high quality for them to be clear about how to improve their work.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - giving students more opportunities and incentives to develop their numeracy skills across all areas of the curriculum
 - ensuring that marking and feedback to students is always of high quality so they are clear about how to improve their work.

- Improve teaching and learning so that all lessons are at least good and more are outstanding by:
 - providing students with more opportunities to learn independently and work things out for themselves
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations are high and work is sufficiently challenging and matched well to students' needs in all lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enjoy learning and achieve well. Most have good attitudes to learning, concentrate on the task in hand and work hard in lessons. In a good lesson, students worked confidently in pairs and assessed each other's work while developing their speaking and listening skills and their understanding of the play 'Romeo and Juliet'. Work in students' books and that on display, together with the academy's tracking information, confirms the good progress that students are making. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress as their peers. That is because they receive timely and well-focused help from teachers and teaching assistants which extends their skills and understanding and gives them the confidence to succeed. In each of the last three years, both in the predecessor school and the academy, over 85% of students attained five A* to C GCSE or equivalent grades at the end of Year 11 and data indicate that the predecessor school and the academy have been in the top 10% of schools nationally for adding value to its students. All groups of students, including those with English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals, are making equally good progress in their learning.

Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for future life. Their attendance is average. They have an excellent understanding of the working environment through the academy's very close links with businesses, employers and industry. They have well-developed teamwork skills, are enterprising and willingly take on responsibility. Students show respect for each other and for academy staff and are welcoming to visitors. They have a good understanding of other communities and cultures through the academy's many overseas links, numerous fund-raising activities and through assemblies and citizenship lessons.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and some lessons have outstanding qualities. Teachers have good relationships with their students and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust. Most teachers make good use of varied teaching methods to give students opportunities to work in pairs and teams and to assess their own work. In a few lessons, students have too few opportunities to learn independently and find out things for themselves. Most lessons are briskly paced, so no learning time is wasted and students enjoy the challenge of demanding work. Less successful, although satisfactory, lessons are characterised by a slower pace, less challenging work and lower teacher expectations. Although the academy has successfully focused on raising attainment in mathematics, there are still too few opportunities and incentives for students to develop their numeracy skills in all subjects. Examples of high-quality marking and feedback to students were seen in lessons, but this good practice is not yet consistent throughout the academy, so students are not always sure how to improve their work.

The curriculum is broad, reflects the academy's specialism in business and enterprise, and offers students a wide choice of academic and vocational courses which are matched to their needs well. A good range of extra-curricular activities adds to students' enjoyment of learning and has a high take-up. Students speak enthusiastically of their varied sporting successes and of taking part in the academy's twice-yearly dramatic productions. They value also the many opportunities the academy provides to visit places such as London and Germany.

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

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Parents, carers and students are very appreciative of the good care, guidance and support the academy provides. Several parents and carers commented on how well their Year 7 children had settled into the academy. Transition arrangements are well organised and ensure that students move smoothly from one stage of their education to the next. The academy’s systems of ‘rescue and reward’ and ‘rescue and return’ ensure that all students receive timely help, when this is needed, and that their efforts are recognised. Good links with outside agencies ensure that students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive the specialist help they need.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body, leaders and managers at all levels have a clear and shared vision for academy improvement. The headteacher has been instrumental in promoting an ethos in the academy whereby students and staff feel valued and are given the confidence to succeed. Teaching and learning are monitored carefully, the tracking of students’ progress is thorough and accurate, and the academy sets and meets challenging targets for its students. Governance is good. The governing body knows the academy well, monitors its work carefully and is increasingly involved in its strategic development. The academy has good relationships with a very wide range of partners. Its strong links with business and industry both enhance the curriculum and contribute significantly to students’ understanding of the working environment. Students have very productive opportunities to be involved in all aspects of academy life. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of child protection and risk assessment procedures. The academy promotes community cohesion well both through its links with partners in the local community and through its many connections with communities and cultures overseas.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	2

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met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students make good progress in the sixth form. They enter Year 12 with below-average and often low levels of attainment. However, they are able to choose from a range of courses which are matched to their needs well and they make good progress in their learning. Consequently, their overall attainment is much closer to the national average and, for some students, higher than this when they leave the academy. Teaching and learning are good. Students are keen to succeed and have good relationships with their teachers. Relevant courses and knowledgeable teaching ensure students are engaged in their studies fully. Students were seen making particularly good progress in a course on countryside management, when they were planning a research project. Retention and attendance rates are satisfactory. Students are keen to take on responsibilities. They work as volunteers and organise events within the sixth form, the wider academy and local community. The care, support and guidance provided by the academy ensure that students are well prepared for their learning, for future work and for entry into higher education. Leadership and management, with the experienced support and involvement of the headteacher, are good.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire is entirely happy with the education the academy provides. They particularly appreciate the way in which the academy keeps their children safe, the good teaching it provides and the good progress children make. Inspection evidence

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supports these views entirely. A few parents and carers felt that the academy did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and did not help their children to develop a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found both behaviour and the academy's promotion of healthy lifestyles to be good. Inspection evidence showed that behaviour was managed well by staff and most students had a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lincoln Castle 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 270 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 815 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	91	34	162	60	13	5	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	98	36	165	61	5	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	108	40	155	57	6	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	36	166	61	4	1	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	92	34	175	65	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	64	24	179	66	14	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	19	185	69	24	9	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)	81	30	168	62	7	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	79	29	178	66	8	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	80	30	155	57	20	7	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	17	197	73	12	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	92	34	164	61	6	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	128	47	136	50	4	1	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



13 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Lincoln Castle Academy, Lincoln, LN1 3SP

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your academy this week. We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up your time to discuss with us your experience at the academy. Please thank your parents and carers for filling in our questionnaire.

This is what we have said about the academy in our report.

- It is a good academy where you are all given very positive opportunities to succeed, teaching and learning are good, you make good progress, your attainment is average and your achievement is good.
- The care, guidance and support you receive, the curriculum you follow and the way your academy is led and managed are all good.
- Many aspects of your personal development, including your behaviour, are good and consequently you are well prepared for the next stage of your education and for future work.

We have asked the academy to focus on two main areas for improvement. The first is to raise the standards you reach and accelerate progress you make, particularly in mathematics. We want teachers to give you clear guidance about what you need to do to improve your work and for them to provide you with more opportunities to use your numeracy skills in different subjects. The second area is to improve teaching and learning so that all lessons are at least good and more are outstanding. We want teachers to make sure that the work they give you is challenging and that they give you more opportunities to work things out for yourselves. You can all help your academy to improve even further by attending regularly and continuing to work with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Ashdown
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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