

Inspection of a good school: The St Lawrence Academy

Doncaster Road, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire DN15 7DF

Inspection dates:

5–6 February 2020

Outcome

The St Lawrence Academy continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy coming to the school. They work hard in lessons and behave well. But, in some subjects in key stage 3, they do not have enough time to learn everything they need to. This does not help them with their studies in key stage 4.

Pupils feel safe and know staff will help them if they have problems. Many pupils try the extra-curricular activities available. They take on leadership roles, join in sports teams and help with community events. Some pupils lead assemblies and act as role models to their peers. All pupils learn about employment, further education and training. Many pupils build wider skills by taking part in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

A small number of pupils find it difficult to behave well and can disrupt others. Pupils told us some staff do not follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. This can lead to interruptions to lessons and also silly behaviour on corridors.

Pupils told us they feel safe in the school. They say bullying is rare, and staff tackle it quickly when pupils report it. Some pupils said others can use offensive language without thinking about it. They know staff will deal with this if they report it.

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

Pupils study a programme based on the National Curriculum in Years 7 and 8. But they do not have enough time in key stage 3 to build the knowledge they need in some subjects. Teachers sometimes have to cut important topics. For example, this means pupils have gaps in their knowledge in geography and history. If pupils study these subjects in key stage 4, some may have a narrow understanding of the subject. Only a small number of pupils opt to study Spanish GCSE. Leaders have reintroduced music into the curriculum at the start of this academic year.

Most teachers deliver subject content skilfully. They break knowledge down into manageable chunks to help pupils understand. Many teachers ask good questions to check whether pupils remember content. Pupils achieve better in mathematics than in English. This is because mathematics teachers present subject matter clearly. They build knowledge by selecting good questions and activities. This standard is not as consistent in English lessons. In some lessons, Year 11 pupils struggle to remember what they learned in Year 9. They say this is because they are not completing challenging enough tasks.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities receive good support. Staff try hard to meet their needs in the school. Some pupils attend off-site provision, to meet their needs.

Some parents and carers and pupils commented on disruption in some lessons. They say this happens more when the class has supply teachers. Staff absence has contributed to a lack of consistency when managing behaviour. When teachers deliver well-planned lessons, pupils respond well.

Pupils choose from a wide range of academic and vocational options in key stage 4. School leaders offer this because they want pupils to study subjects they enjoy. They try to help all pupils complete their studies at the end of Year 11. They guide some pupils to choose courses related to work. Some learners attend off-site provision for vocational courses. When this happens, staff make sure they attend and achieve well.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and be healthy in 'character' lessons. These lessons include careers guidance. Pupils also build new skills, such as how to present to an audience. The academy has strong partnerships with local employers. Everybody in Year 10 can attend a work experience placement.

Staff are positive about the academy's leaders. They say leaders listen to their suggestions about reducing workload. Teachers now spend less time writing reports and more time planning lessons. Staff appreciate the well-structured training programme. Recently, they learned about ways of helping pupils remember information better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils say they feel safe in the school. They know there is an adult they can talk to if they need help. Pupils learn how to stay safe outside the school, including when they go online.

Leaders work closely with other agencies, such as the local police. Together, they deliver good-quality support to pupils who may be at more risk of harm. Staff are vigilant about safeguarding. They want to keep pupils safe. There are good systems to help them report concerns.

Leaders make sure all staff receive good safeguarding training. They check adults are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key stage 3 curriculum is delivered over two years. But leaders have not put into place any plans to make sure the key stage 3 curriculum is at least as ambitious and broad as the national curriculum. Because of this, pupils do not study some subjects in enough depth and they have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that key stage 3 programmes of study are at least as ambitious and broad as the national curriculum.
- In some subjects, lessons are not as well sequenced as in others. They are not always in an order which makes sense to pupils. Consequently, in some subjects pupils do not remember important knowledge. Leaders should make sure that lessons and learning are sensibly sequenced in all subjects, so that pupils learn and remember the essential knowledge they need.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment effectively to identify the gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, these gaps remain and can disadvantage pupils in future learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment is developed in all subjects, so that it is responsive to pupils' levels of learning, and gaps in knowledge can be addressed quickly.

Not all teachers and staff follow the academy's behaviour management policy consistently. Consequently, in some lessons and around the school, poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils is not dealt with effectively. Leaders should ensure that all staff follow the academy's behaviour management policy consistently, so that the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils is reduced.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	135674
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10121788
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	733
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Waters-Dewhurst
Principal	Michael Adnitt
Website	http://tsla.realsmartcloud.com/
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The St Lawrence Academy is sponsored by the Diocese of Lincoln, which is part of the Church of England.
- The academy was last inspected in June 2016. This was a short (section 8) inspection.
- Since the last inspection a new principal has been appointed.
- A total of 13 pupils attend alternative provision. Nine providers for off-site education are used by the academy: The Darley Centre; Act Fast; Cortani; The Skills Centre Plus; 7KS; Castles; Advanced Solutions; Changing Minds, Changing Lives; and Tamnet.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- We looked closely at English, mathematics, geography and history. We talked to subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons and talked to pupils about their learning in these subjects.
- We talked to teachers about how they plan and deliver the curriculum. We also asked them about workload, training and behaviour around the school.

- We met with trustees and school leaders. We asked leaders about the way they have designed the curriculum and the support they provide for pupils.
- Parents, pupils and staff submitted responses to questionnaires. In total there were 40 replies from parents, 132 from pupils and 59 from staff. We analysed these responses and adjusted inspection activities where further information was needed.
- We observed behaviour in lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector spoke to representatives from alternative provision settings.
- We reviewed the academy's extra-curricular and enrichment programmes.
- We carefully checked the academy's safeguarding arrangements. This included scrutinising the academy's Single Central Record and arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils who may be at risk of harm.

Inspection team

John McNally, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Cook

Ofsted Inspector

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