

Inspection of The St Lawrence Academy

Doncaster Road, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire DN15 7DF

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

At The St Lawrence Academy, the core values of generosity, respect and forgiveness are well understood by both pupils and staff. The Christian ethos of the school complements these principles well. Staff are committed to pupils' well-being and understand the challenges they may face, inside and outside of school. Pupils feel safe and have an adult they would speak to if something worried them.

Leaders' actions are helping to better prepare pupils for their next steps in education, employment or training. Since the previous inspection, changes to the curriculum, including assessment and approach to reading, have taken place. However, leaders' vision is not yet fully realised because weaknesses remain in some subjects. As a result, pupils do not receive a consistently good quality of education.

Pupils celebrate difference; they learn about a range of faiths and cultures and are encouraged to be respectful citizens. Pupil prefects are excellent ambassadors for the school. The combined cadet force creates a strong sense of community pride and shared responsibility. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. The small number of pupils who do experience bullying feel confident to report it. In most cases, staff deal with issues between pupils well.

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

Leaders have identified certain school improvement priorities and begun to act upon these. However, leaders have not addressed important areas requiring improvement with sufficient urgency, including curriculum design and assessment. Quality assurance processes do not give them an accurate understanding of the impact of their work. Governors and directors of the trust challenge leaders to support school improvement. However, they are not able to provide effective support to leaders because they do not have the right information to do so.

In some subjects, leaders have ensured that the important knowledge they want pupils to know and remember is clearly set out. Where the curriculum is stronger, teachers know what to teach and in what order. Leaders have identified parts of the curriculum pupils often struggle to understand. However, in some subjects, leaders have not planned the curriculum with such precision. This leads to pupils receiving an inconsistent quality of education across the school.

Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have previously learned. As a result, some pupils are beginning to remember more of what they have been taught. However, leaders have not implemented a coherent approach to assessment across the school. This means that staff do not have a good understanding of what pupils know and can do in all subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders with responsibility for SEND know pupils' individual needs well. However, leaders have not ensured that all staff have a good understanding of how to support pupils with SEND. Leaders do not carefully monitor the quality of teaching for these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they might.

Leaders have recently strengthened their focus on literacy across the school. Teachers regularly read with pupils in lessons and explain new vocabulary. Leaders use specific strategies to support the weakest readers, including pupils who speak English as an additional language. This approach includes additional reading lessons for Year 7 pupils. However, the approach to improving pupils' ability to decode new words is less well developed. This is limiting the impact of leaders' work to improve levels of literacy among some pupils.

The school's personal development curriculum is well considered. The curriculum helps pupils to stay safe and develop an understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils have a strong understanding of other faiths and cultures. They learn about important topics such as online safety, healthy relationships and British values. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, which pupils engage with well. These include gardening, cheerleading and a culture club, which celebrates the school's diverse pupil population.

Careers education is a strength of the school. Pupils receive independent careers advice. They are well prepared to make important decisions about their future. Leaders provide a rich set of experiences linked to pupils' careers. These include presentations by visiting speakers, trips to universities and colleges, as well as work experience. Regular 'Futures' lessons help pupils to reflect on potential career choices in an informed manner.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff understand the risks that pupils might be exposed to. They report any concerns about pupils' well-being. Leaders respond quickly and involve parents and external agencies effectively. This helps to ensure pupils are kept safe from harm.

The curriculum for personal development helps pupils to know how to stay safe in person and online. They understand potential risks well. Pupils have access to professional mental health support within school. Those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of the safeguarding risks that may impact the school community. They check on leaders' actions to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planning and implementation of the curriculum is variable across the school. The important knowledge and skills pupils must learn, as well as potential misconceptions, have not been clearly identified by leaders in all subjects. This means that staff cannot adapt their teaching effectively to ensure that pupils reach clear end points in their learning and achieve ambitious outcomes. Leaders should review all subject curriculums to ensure they clearly identify what is to be taught, in what order and that potential misconceptions are identified and addressed by all staff.
- Assessment processes are new and underdeveloped. This means that leaders cannot use the information from assessments to help inform curriculum planning and implementation. Leaders should ensure that their initial work to develop assessment across the school and the outcomes used to identify next steps for staff and pupils are fully embedded.
- The curriculum, as well as approaches to teaching, is not well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders with responsibility for SEND have not identified weaknesses in SEND provision and planned appropriate staff training to address these shortcomings. As a result, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they might. Leaders should ensure that they regularly review provision for pupils with SEND and identify where curriculum adaptations or further professional development are required.
- Systems and processes for quality assuring the school's performance and/or leaders' work are not providing leaders and governors with an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the school. This means that leaders have not accurately assessed the impact of their work and identified ongoing school improvement priorities. Leaders should review their approach to quality assurance so that it provides leaders at all levels, including those responsible for governance, with an accurate understanding of school improvement priorities.

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](#)' 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	10255607
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	790
Appropriate authority	Trust board of directors
Chair of trust	Rt Revd. David Court
Headteacher	Phillip Dalowsky
Website	www.tsla.realsmartcloud.com
Date of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and a number of other senior leaders are new to post.
- The school joined The St Lawrence Multi-Academy Trust in September 2021. Prior to this, it was a standalone academy.
- The school makes use of ten alternative providers. Four of these are not registered with the Department for Education.
- Careers guidance in the school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which means pupils in Years 7 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options available to them. This includes opportunities for a range of providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the local authority. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and those responsible for governance.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in science, English, history and computing. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders from mathematics and religious education to discuss the curriculum in these subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience in lessons, enrichment opportunities and what it is like to attend the school.
- Inspectors examined the schools' behaviour records, spoke to pupils who had been suspended from school and spoke with providers of alternative education.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons. One inspector visited the nurture classroom within the school.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come on to the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tricia Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Hemming	Ofsted Inspector

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