

Invenio Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137004
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	395380
Inspection dates	30 April 2012–1 May 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Jones

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Pattinson
Headteacher	Stephen Gallaher
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Jones
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching in 42 lessons taught by 36 teachers or teaching assistants, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. Meetings were held with staff, students and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including behaviour and bullying records, documents relating to the academy's self-evaluation and safeguarding records. They scrutinised the work students were doing in their books and examined the tracking systems used to monitor students' progress. Inspectors considered the 104 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as others from students and staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized secondary academy. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students belonging to minority ethnic groups is average, but fewer than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

The newly-built academy opened in August 2011 on the site of its predecessor school FTC Performing Arts College. In 2011, its predecessor school met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school operates a model of learning in which six mini-schools, each called a 'discover', houses approximately 130 students. Students spend the majority of their time working in a large open-plan area and receive small-group tutorials at various times during the day in rooms off the open-plan area.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory academy. It is not yet good because the quality of teaching, while improving, is satisfactory. Moreover, while achievement is also improving, it varies between subjects, so remains satisfactory overall. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory because most students in Years 7 to 10 make satisfactory progress and reach standards of attainment that are broadly average. Students' attainment and rates of progress in English lag behind those in mathematics.
- While teaching is improving, inconsistencies in its quality means that it is satisfactory overall. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching which capture students' interests, provide challenge and stimulate students' curiosity. Too much teaching, however, is pedestrian or lacks spark. The performing arts are strengths in the academy which contribute significantly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour and safety are good because students behave courteously towards each other and to adults. Incidents of bullying are rare and when they do occur are dealt with swiftly.
- Good leadership and management have resulted in the academy implementing a visionary approach towards teaching and learning. Exemplary methods of tracking students' progress result in swift action being taken when students underperform. Strong leadership of teaching and learning has ensured there are increased opportunities for teachers to share their expertise and that training is of a high quality. There are early signs that these factors are having a positive impact on rapidly increasing rates of progress for students in Years 7 to 10 who have benefited from the 'discover' model of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching across the academy to be at least good by:
 - increasing the opportunities for students to be actively involved in their own learning through discussions, debates and problem-solving in teams
 - asking students questions that are challenging, thought-provoking, and require students to answer in full sentences
 - ensuring teaching assistants encourage students to solve their own problems rather than over-support them
 - ensuring all students maintain pace in their learning when working independently in the open areas.
- Raise achievement in English to be at least good by:
 - accelerating progress in reading for students whose attainment is below age-related expectations
 - ensuring every opportunity is taken to develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students learn best when they are fully engaged in their own learning, have the opportunities to work collaboratively and teachers ensure they develop students' literacy skills across subjects. Inspectors saw significant strengths in the performing arts, where ample opportunities were available for students to talk about each others' choreography or their music compositions using subject-specific language. Similarly, in art, time is made for students to appraise each others' paintings; teachers skilfully guiding students so they answer questions in full sentences, use vocabulary that stretches them which improves their literacy skills. Where learning and progress is less successful, students tend to be over-directed, there are insufficient opportunities for them to discuss or debate issues in groups or they simply receive a series of instructions of what they should do when they continue their learning in the large open-plan areas.

Systems for tracking students' progress indicate that the current Year 11 cohort had below average levels of attainment when they entered school in Year 7. This cohort is on track to make satisfactory progress across all subjects from their starting points. Only one year of this period was spent in the academy, however.

Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and the academy's own tracking show that progress for students in other year groups, other than Year 11, is satisfactory and accelerating, with standards of attainment being broadly average. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Support for the increasing number of students who speak English as an additional language is of high quality. This means that they quickly gain in confidence, mix well with their peers and often make good progress. In mathematics, a fast pace of learning and work that closely matches students' abilities means that they make more progress and reach higher standards of attainment than they do in

English. This is because a significant number of students arrive at the academy with reading abilities that are well below age-related expectations. The academy is able to demonstrate that most of these students require significant support. The academy has responded well to this issue, these students are making satisfactory progress and the academy has introduced a structured scheme to accelerate these students' progress in reading. However, this is still too new for any significant impact to be measured. Furthermore, there are sometimes missed opportunities for students to develop their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills across all areas of the curriculum. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are happy with the academy and that their children are making good progress. Inspection evidence indicates that in the eight months the school has been open, students are making satisfactory progress overall but there are indicators that the rate of progress is accelerating for younger students.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching varies from inadequate to outstanding, so lacks consistency across the academy. In one music lesson where the teaching was outstanding, students played games to develop their understanding of musical terms; the teacher very skilfully asking them challenging questions which required them to answer in full sentences and to develop their arguments. This developed their speaking and listening skills and ensured they were fully involved in their own learning. Teaching assistants provide good quality support when they help students to solve their own problems and knowing precisely when to move away from students so they are able to help themselves. Inspectors observed this in practice during a history lesson, where students with special educational needs buzzed with excitement as they wrote a 'text message' fact about the slave trade using information gathered from source materials, while sensitively being supported by teaching assistants. Where their support is less helpful, teaching assistants over-support students and, at times, do the work for them; this limits the learning by the student. In the small tutorial rooms, teachers tend to adopt an instructional style of teaching. Questioning sometimes elicits single-word answers from students which does not fully challenge them or questions are only asked to students who are motivated to put their hands up to answer. Moreover, there are missed opportunities to involve students in collaborative work through discussions, debates and problem-solving in teams.

There are similar inconsistencies in the way the different mini-schools ensure the pace of learning is maintained while students are working in the open areas. In Hawking, where most disabled students and those with special educational needs are housed, students are kept on task because teachers and teaching assistants are able to closely monitor their contributions and those who are working on one subject sit adjacent to each other. In the other mini-schools, however, students sit next to others who are working on different curriculum subjects. This makes it difficult for some teachers to monitor their contributions and keep them on task. While many students rise to this challenge and work conscientiously, some drift off task, chat and do not complete the work set for them. Throughout the academy, teaching promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Inspectors observed this in abundance within the performing and visual arts. For example, students learned about African musical traditions through 'call and response' playing on djembe drums.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly of the opinion that the academy meets their children's needs well. A small minority expressed concerns about teaching not developing skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found strengths in the

quality of teaching but concluded that the variability in its quality, along with overall satisfactory achievement being made means that teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors spoke to many students, the overwhelming majority of whom are confident the academy keeps them safe and secure. The high-profile peer mentors are well trained and are instrumental in ensuring students have somebody to talk to, should the need arise. During the inspection, peer mentors were preparing a presentation on cyber-bullying to be shown to each mini-school. Academy records indicate that instances of bullying are rare, with students well aware of the different kinds of bullying and what they should do if they fall victim to bullying. Record keeping for behaviour-related incidents is detailed, showing patterns in students' behaviour so that academy leaders can take decisive action when it is needed. Students show a particularly good awareness of bullying and harassment associated with the internet and mobile electronic devices. In the large, open-plan areas, behaviour is orderly and students behave well, responding to the academy's well thought-out behaviour code. Students comment on how behaviour has improved significantly from the time they were in the predecessor school and how they now feel much safer in the academy. This is reflected in their high attendance. A very large majority of parents and carers are confident that behaviour issues do not disrupt learning; a view endorsed by the inspection findings.

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher and his senior team lead with energy and considerable vision. They have trained staff to deliver lessons and tutorials using a model which is innovative and focuses on the needs of the individual student. The meticulous tracking of students' progress across all subjects has enabled academy leaders to precisely target areas of weakness in the short time the academy has been open. The progress of different groups of students is monitored carefully so that no group underachieves. Discrimination is tackled decisively whenever and wherever it exists and consequently the academy promotes equal opportunities well. Middle leaders take on strategic leadership roles in each of the mini-schools, developing teachers' subject knowledge well and ensuring that the management of teachers' performance is sharp and identifies weaknesses effectively. Particularly successful has been teachers' use of the virtual learning environment which has quickly become the key method of distributing learning materials to students. While teaching remains satisfactory, increasing rates of progress in all subjects indicates that over time and in comparison to data from the predecessor school, its quality is improving and that the leadership and management of teaching is good. These factors mean that the academy is well placed to continue its improvement.

Development plans are clear, giving the governing body precisely the information they need to hold the academy closely to account on matters relating to achievement. The academy engages and keeps parents and carers informed very well, with progress reports being sent home every three weeks. Some parents and carers remain sceptical about the innovative approaches to learning, although the overwhelming majority of parents and carers in Year 7, whose children started the academy in the new building, are supportive of the new approach.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it is broad and balanced and constantly under review so that the needs of students are met. For example, academy leaders quickly noted that off-site curricular provision in Key Stage 4 was weak. This has now been overhauled so that no

students are disadvantaged. Assemblies are vibrant, thought provoking and develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. The academy meets all current safeguarding requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Invenio Academy, Scunthorpe, DN15 8LJ

Thank you for speaking with us when we came to inspect your academy. This letter is to tell you what we found out. Your academy is satisfactory, but there are significant things about it that are good. In the short time that your academy has been open, your headteachers and staff have ensured behaviour is good and that you are making the progress expected of you. You told us that you feel very safe and that you enjoy the discover style of learning which enables you to work at your own pace. Your teachers keep a very close eye on your progress to make sure nobody falls behind. We have asked your headteachers and staff to do two things to improve the academy.

The first thing is to improve the quality of teaching so it is all at least good. To do this, we have asked that you are given more opportunities in lessons and tutorials to work in teams, solving problems and taking part in discussions. We have also asked that teachers ask you questions that require you to answer in full sentences and that make you think hard. We also noticed that at times, some of you drift off-task, perhaps chatting to your neighbour when you are working in the open-plan areas. We have, therefore, asked that teachers make sure you are kept busy at all times.

The second area to improve is your achievement in English. At the moment, you are making more progress in mathematics, so we have asked that you are given plenty of opportunities to develop your English skills across all subjects and that those of you who find reading difficult are given extra help to accelerate your progress.

You can help by giving long answers to questions when asked and, focusing on your work if you find yourself drifting off when you are supposed to be working in the open plan areas.

Yours sincerely

Robert Jones
Lead inspector

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