

Inspection of The Priory Academy LSST

Cross O'Cliff Hill, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN5 8PW

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

The headteacher of this school is Jane Hopkinson. This school is part of The Priory Federation of Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ian Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Howard Gee.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Priory Academy LSST has very high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. There is an aspirational culture in the school that is shared by staff and pupils. Pupils are challenged to be the best they can be. They rise to the challenge, and most achieve well. Beyond the academic, the school supports pupils' wider personal development exceptionally well. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education and their future lives.

The school provides a very broad range of extra-curricular activities. Many pupils take part in clubs that stretch their talents and interests in sport and creative arts. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A large number of pupils are proud to be part of the Combined Cadet Force or achieve in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Sixth-form students enthusiastically take on responsibilities to support the school community. They proudly fulfil roles such as those of prefects and sports leaders. Many act as academic mentors to younger pupils.

The vast majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life. There is a strong pastoral system that supports pupils' well-being. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. They trust that staff will provide support if they need it.

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

The school has designed a very ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is designed to support all pupils to gain the knowledge and cultural capital they need to pursue their aspirations. In key stage 3, pupils study the full range of subjects. In key stages 4 and 5, pupils choose from a very broad range of options. Almost all pupils study GCSE courses that make up the English Baccalaureate. At every stage, the curriculum is sequenced well, so that pupils build knowledge and deepen their understanding over time.

In the sixth form, the demanding curriculum provides students with a strong depth of knowledge. Students receive exceptional academic and pastoral support that prepares them very well for their next steps. Many go on to aspirational destinations.

The school ensures that all subjects are taught by knowledgeable, specialist teachers. In the majority of lessons, teachers explain concepts clearly. They check pupils' understanding often and provide useful feedback to address any misconceptions. There are many opportunities for pupils to revisit topics they have learned before and to make links with new knowledge. Lesson activities are well planned to ensure that pupils learn the important knowledge and develop skills. Staff adapt lessons effectively so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum in

full. In these lessons, pupils thrive. They produce high-quality work and remember what they have learned.

In a small number of lessons, the delivery of the curriculum is not consistent. Sometimes, explanations are unclear. Routines for checking what pupils have learned are not firmly established in all lessons. This means that gaps in pupils' understanding are not always identified. Sometimes, pupils do not get feedback that helps them to progress quickly. In some lessons, pupils with SEND do not receive effective support.

There is a sharp focus on language and communication in the curriculum. Pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary so that they can discuss and write about what they are learning. Pupils read often and make use of a well-stocked library. The school provides effective support for pupils who need extra help with reading.

Most pupils attend school well. The school is calm and orderly. In lessons and at social times, pupils are polite and get along well with each other and staff. There are well-established routines in place to support pupils to behave well. Pupils are keen to learn and try hard in almost all lessons. Disruptions to learning are rare. Sixth-form students are resilient. They show remarkably positive attitudes towards learning and all aspects of school life.

Pupils' personal development is very well supported by an excellent curriculum for personal, social and health education. Through well-planned lessons, assemblies and 'awareness days', pupils learn about British values, and equality and diversity. Pupils are knowledgeable and discuss these themes maturely and thoughtfully. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school provides excellent support for pupils' mental health. All pupils, including those with SEND, take part in a range of interesting extra-curricular activities to complete their 'enrichment passport'.

The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for their future careers. All pupils benefit from high-quality guidance from a range of external providers, such as colleges, universities and employers. Pupils appreciate this. They are very well informed and talk confidently about their ambitions for the future. In the sixth form, students receive high-quality, personalised support to help them identify, and prepare for, ambitious university courses and careers.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They work well together to support the school's high expectations. The school helps staff to manage their workload and supports their well-being. Many staff enjoy opportunities to develop their subject knowledge further and share their expertise with other schools. The school is well supported by the multi-academy trust. Trust leaders, trustees and governors know the school well. They provide effective support and challenge to the school and fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is not wholly consistent. In some lessons, routines are not firmly embedded for checking pupils' understanding or providing useful feedback to pupils. Sometimes, lessons are not adapted well enough to meet the needs of all learners. This means that pupils, including those with SEND, do not reliably learn new knowledge as securely as they might. The school needs to ensure that the ambitious curriculum is delivered consistently well.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 135565 |
| Local authority | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 10267895 |
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,790 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 453 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Howard Gee |
| CEO of the trust | Ian Jones |
| Headteacher | Jane Hopkinson |
| Website | www.prioryacademies.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | November 2010 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, as well as the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the trust's education and standards committee, and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, geography, modern foreign languages, art and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum with leaders and visited lessons in a range of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with pupils from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| John Spragg, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Sue Wood | Ofsted Inspector |
| Peter Gilbride | Ofsted Inspector |
| Matthew Sammy | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alison Davies | Ofsted Inspector |
| Julie McBrearty | Ofsted Inspector |

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