

Inspection of Priors Hall - A Learning Community

Gretton Road, Priors Hall, Priors Hall Park, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5EB

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Tess McQuade. This school is part of Inspiring Futures Through Learning multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Bennett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marilyn Hubbard.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's high expectations are embodied in its motto 'ready for learning, ready for life'. From the moment children join the school's outstanding early years provision, staff teach them how to be good learners. Pupils build on these firm foundations and achieve well across the curriculum.

The school deliberately weaves pupils' personal development into all aspects of life at Priors Hall. It takes every opportunity to broaden pupils' horizons and to help them become well-rounded, healthy, respectful citizens.

Pupils attend well. The nurturing environment and the school's ambitious curriculum make it a place where pupils want to be. Pupils feel safe, happy and valued. Pupils summed up the school's inclusive ethos perfectly by typically saying, 'You can be yourself here and everyone is respected.'

There are warm relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils appreciate that staff really listen to them during daily well-being check-ins and do something to help them when necessary. There is high-quality pastoral support available. Pupils can access the space called 'The Spot' if they need help with their well-being.

Pupils behave well in class and during social times. Classrooms are calm places where pupils can concentrate on their learning. Most pupils sustain their focus well.

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

The school's curriculum is well organised to ensure that pupils learn new knowledge and skills in a precise order. Opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions are threaded through the curriculum. The development of pupils' vocabulary is also a key feature. The school's sharp focus on language development helps disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) achieve well.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They model new concepts well and check closely on pupils' learning. Teachers know the individual needs of the pupils they teach. They adapt their lessons well so that disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and pupils who speak EAL access the same learning as their peers. The school identifies any additional needs that pupils may have swiftly. Pupils with complex needs receive effective support. However, in some subjects, some pupils do not remember what has been taught before well enough. This is because some teachers do not routinely revisit important prior learning. In some subjects, tasks are not always designed to help pupils master the most ambitious aims of the school's curriculum. This means that some pupils do not achieve as highly as they might.

Reading is a passion at this school. Staff are experts in teaching pupils how to read. The school ensures that anyone who falls behind in phonics is given extra help straight away. This means that a very high proportion of pupils meet the standard in the phonics

screening check before they go into Year 2. Pupils encounter a rich range of texts, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The school has deliberately chosen ambitious texts that develop pupils' comprehension skills and teach them about different places, beliefs, cultures and backgrounds. Pupils enjoy the materials they read together and take life lessons from them.

The school's early years provision is remarkable. Children benefit from taking part in first-rate, adult-led conversations. These high-quality conversations deepen children's understanding and develop their communication skills. Well-established routines and high expectations mean that children sustain their concentration for long periods of time. Expertly crafted learning activities allow children to acquire knowledge across all areas of learning. Staff support children's imaginary play very well, using these opportunities to teach children to share, collaborate and be safe.

There are effective systems in place for managing pupils' behaviour and ensuring that they attend well. The school intervenes early if pupils have too much time off school.

The school's exceptional personal development provision gives pupils the knowledge they need to make healthy choices, contribute to society and value the importance of diversity and equality. Pupils are interested in the different ways that people choose to live their lives and respect their right to do so. The school's work to develop character is incredibly strong. By the time pupils reach Year 6, for instance, they have an advanced understanding of the school's four core values of resilience, curiosity, respect and kindness. Pupils know how these qualities benefit themselves and those around them. They embrace the very wide range of carefully planned opportunities to develop their talents and interests.

The school is well led. Local governors and the trust team provide effective challenge and support. Staff enjoy working at Priors Hall. They appreciate the time they have to evaluate the subjects they lead. Staff feel valued and trusted.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, teachers do not provide work that allows pupils to learn the most demanding curriculum content in some subjects. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. The school should ensure that teachers provide opportunities that allow pupils to master the ambitious aims of its curriculum.
- In some subjects, some pupils do not remember what has been taught before in sufficient detail. This prevents some pupils from building on their prior learning and deepening their understanding over time. The school should review and refine its

approach to retaining key knowledge so that pupils remember important prior learning securely in every subject and gain the deep and detailed understanding of the curriculum that the school intends.

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

Unique reference number	146712
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347683
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard
CEO of the trust	Sarah Bennett
Headteacher	Tess McQuade
Website	www.priorshallschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Priors Hall - A Learning Community converted to become an academy school in April 2020 as part of Inspiring Futures Through Learning multi-academy trust. When its predecessor school, Priors Hall - A Learning Community, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The current headteacher took up their role in December 2020.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in English, art and design, religious education and personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with EAL. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for the early years, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- 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 examined a range of school documents relating to behaviour, attendance and governance, as well as the school improvement plan and documents relating to leaders' self-evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the CEO.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and of the board of trustees, including the chair of the local governing body and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chrissie Barrington

Ofsted Inspector

Dave Ellison-Lee

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Louise Aird

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