



The Priory School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120750
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291845
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Naylor

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Neville Avenue
School category	Community special		Spalding
Age range of pupils	11–16		Lincolnshire PE11 2EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01775 724080
Number on roll (school)	119	Fax number	01775 713860
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Mavis Doughty
		Headteacher	Mr Daran Bland
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	28–29 September 2006	291845

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Priory School serves a large part of South Lincolnshire. Pupils have moderate learning difficulties although many have additional special educational needs including, autistic spectrum disorders, emotional and behavioural difficulties or complex learning needs. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. About a quarter of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the school serves an area which has a generally poor and deprived economy. Seven pupils aged 16–19 are based at the school for three days each week as part of the Priory Extra further education transition group, and are taught by school staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a thriving school that is giving pupils a good standard of education. The school is over-cautious in its self-evaluation in this respect. There is satisfactory leadership and direction by the senior leadership team which fosters an energetic team spirit by staff and very good relationships with pupils. Staff in most respects place high value on creating a safe, healthy and enjoyable place for pupils to learn in. As a result pupils' personal development is excellent and they make good progress in their knowledge and skills. Achievement is therefore good, especially in areas such as social independence and work related skills. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, which means that pupils are given every opportunity to learn about keeping healthy. Pupils enjoy their nutritious school meals. They take advantage of the many sporting activities and competitions provided during and after school and enjoy activities in the school's fitness suite and at local leisure centres. Participation in outdoor adventurous activities as part of the Kielder Challenge means they learn teamwork and physical problem solving. Pupils undertake work experience and college placements. They run successful mini-enterprises, and engage in other work-related learning which gives them awareness and training in skills they will need for the future. They work closely with many aspects of the local and wider community. They care for their school environment and that of other areas. They raise money for charities by their own fund-raising and enterprise initiatives. Pupils take advantage of the excellent opportunities to broaden their cultural experiences through the links with European special schools. Teaching is good, therefore pupils make rapid progress from the time they join the school. This is noted by many parents with comments such as, 'My son has come on in leaps and bounds'. Teachers are good at making lessons fun, interesting and making sure that they match the individual special educational needs of pupils so that they promote effective learning. Staff have good relationships with pupils and set clear expectations of behaviour and performance. They praise and reward effort and success. As a result pupils respond and behave well. Pupils enjoy their lessons and want to come to school. The curriculum is well planned. It provides good support to the personal development and learning for pupils of all abilities. It prepares them particularly well for transition to adult life and involves them directly in many activities within the local community. It is particularly effective in promoting pupils' self-confidence and their awareness of relationships through in many lessons. For example, in a drama session, pupils learn how to be more assertive and how to combat bullying. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and know someone to turn to if they have a problem. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is exceptional in the opportunities that it provides to extend pupils' knowledge and experience of work-related and vocational activities. Many of these are closely connected to the local industries of horticulture and farming. The school has its own horticulture area in which pupils successfully learn key skills about planting, growing and marketing their products. Pastoral welfare is good. Good support is provided to pupils' welfare by links with other professionals and agencies. Although the school generally takes satisfactory care of pupils' safety from day-to-day, there are some gaps in the school's safeguarding procedures. Teachers successfully conduct Annual Reviews of Statements and make

good use of individual education plans to effectively guide pupils' progress. Parents are fully involved in this process and they are kept well aware of their child's progress. The leadership of the school is satisfactory in evaluating the school's overall performance and has addressed issues from the previous inspection. Subject leaders guide their subjects well but insufficient time is allocated to allow them to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subject. There is satisfactory use of assessment and of pupil performance data to help set individual pupil targets for achievement. The leadership team is actively pursuing extending this to the setting of whole school targets. However, school leaders and governors are not yet meeting government requirements for safeguarding pupils. Nevertheless, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement and gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more non-teaching time for subject leaders to be able to evaluate the impact of teaching on raising achievement in their subject. - Ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are kept up to date so that government requirements are met.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school has been too cautious in its estimation; achievement and progress are good. As a result of the good teaching, the great majority of pupils in last three years have moved on at the end of Year 11 to further education or training. Pupils make good progress in their skills and knowledge and in their understanding. They make exceptional progress in their social abilities. Groups of pupils, including those with autism and those in Priory Extra, make good progress. There has been improved progress in reading during the year because of specific teaching strategies. Pupils achieve their personal targets in the core subjects of English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and in personal, social, health education and citizenship. They achieve good rates of success in a raft of external accreditation including the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Bronze Award; as well as other certificates in skills for working life, work experience, and vocational courses. Year 11 pupils have very successfully taken part in two Young Enterprise Initiatives. All pupils in Year 11 were awarded the Lincolnshire Local Authority Employability Graduation Award.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. Parents report that their children leave school in Year 11 very well prepared for college or further training and that they grow in maturity and self confidence whilst at the school. This prepares them well for their future. Pupils themselves consider that they make good progress in their lessons because teaching is good and there are lots of interesting good things to do. They enjoy and talk enthusiastically about many of the things they like about school.

Consequently their behaviour and attendance is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' cultural experiences are particularly enhanced by the visits and contacts they make with other similar pupils in European countries. Pupils are keen to participate in a wide range of sporting and physical activities that help to promote their health, fitness and safety. Pupils generally feel safe and secure in school. However, they recognise that bullying can occasionally be a problem and they are learning how to prevent and reduce this in school through the help of the Advocacy in Schools Organisation, their own school council and in their personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The great majority of lessons are well focused on what pupils should learn, with care taken to make sure that pupils understand how they will do this. Lessons, therefore, begin on a positive note with expectations well-established. As a result, pupils get down to work quickly showing their enthusiasm and interest to learn. Teachers and their assistants invest a great deal in making lessons lively and fun for pupils by their careful choice of activities, in particular the good use made of ICT, practical work and pupils working with each other independently. The pace of learning is usually carefully adjusted to the needs of pupils, whilst in the best lessons, really confident teaching makes considerable demands and pupils respond in positive and sometimes unexpected ways. For example, at first it appeared that Year 9 had not remembered much about their visit to an Iron Age site but when pressed hard revealed they had learnt a considerable amount. This is a measure of how well teachers and their assistants know the pupils, and they use this knowledge effectively in planning classroom activities and to inform their assessments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The range of work and activities is good. These are enriched well by the many extra activities such as lunchtime clubs and after school events, especially in sports. The curriculum is planned well in relation to pupils' learning difficulties and contributes considerably to their enjoyment of school and to good achievement. Literacy and numeracy are given appropriate emphasis. Pupils' personal, social and health education has also a high priority. A wide range of topics are taught beginning in Year 7, using an ASDAN programme of study. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is particularly strong as a result of the attention given to work related learning and vocational education. Pupils have a broad choice of directions which match their interests and talents. The school has made very good provision for horticulture as this reflects a major source of employment in the area. Enterprise projects have attracted commendations and awards. There is the opportunity also to gain accreditation at different levels on the many courses available. Good links with local schools and colleges

succeed in broadening these opportunities and meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

During the school day pupils are cared for extremely well by staff and this ensures pupils are happy and feel safe and secure. Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good. This builds pupils' confidence and means school is enjoyable. The recently admitted Year 7 pupils have settled extremely well and are coping happily. For example, their inclusion into the life of the school was helped enormously by their wonderful performance of Caribbean folk songs in assembly. While much is done that ensures pupils' safety in school and when they are away on activities, the procedures for making staff checks are not yet complete. Good partnerships with a range of professional agencies provide effective support for pupils and their families, especially in the close working relationship with social services. Speech and language therapy complements the school's work on improving pupils' communication skills. Support from Connexions contributes well to achieving the smooth transition of Year 11 pupils to college. Assessment and setting challenging targets for pupils is being improved but the changes that have happened have had insufficient time to have shown more than a satisfactory impact.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leadership team under the clear direction of the headteacher provides close monitoring and support to the curriculum, teaching and learning. They promote well the school's aims of making learning enjoyable, keeping pupils safe, healthy, involved in the community and aware of what they need to succeed in the future. This is set out distinctly in the school improvement plan. The result is seen reflected in the outstanding personal development of pupils, and the enriched and extended curriculum. However, in one key respect the leadership team and governors fall short of meeting their high ideals and responsibilities because pupil safeguarding procedures only partially meet requirements. Subject leaders do not have a full grasp of what is needed to improve their subjects further. This is because they do not always have sufficient time allowed in which to check and give support to the quality of teaching and learning across the school in their subject. There is good management of the Post-16 provision, Priory Extra. The governors have some direct involvement in school and give sound support through their committees to staff and to pupils.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2006 Dear Pupils and Students The Priory School, Neville Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2EH Thank you very much for the way that you made Mr Lemon and I feel welcome today and yesterday when we visited your school. We were pleased to see how well you are doing with your work. We really enjoyed being with you in assembly when so many of you received certificates and rewards for your good work and behaviour. Yours is a good school and we know that you are very proud of it! We think that teaching is good and lessons are interesting and fun. This means that you are all making good progress and you are learning a lot of things that will be useful to you for the future. You behave well in lessons and around the school. We particularly like the way that you know about keeping yourselves fit and healthy by doing lots of sport and other physical activities. You feel safe in school and are learning how to prevent bullying. We are sure that if you tried hard you could stop bullying altogether in your school. Staff give you good support with praise, encouragement and rewards when you get things right. We told the headteacher that there were a few things that would help the school to be even better. Teachers should have more time to help one another to make sure teaching is the best it can be. Some school procedures need to be fully in place to make sure you are even safer. With best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely Ian Naylor Lead Inspector