

# The Priory Ruskin Academy

Rushcliffe Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 8ED

## Inspection dates

7–13 November 2017

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| 16 to 19 study programmes                    | <b>Good</b>        |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | <b>Good</b>        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Leaders at all levels have created an ambitious culture that encourages all pupils to achieve very highly, both academically and in their personal development.
- The high-quality teaching that pupils across all years receive ensures that they make very strong progress across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders work closely with subject leaders to check classroom practice. Leaders at all levels have a precise understanding of the quality of teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress, as a result of the targeted support that they receive.
- The broad curriculum allows pupils of all abilities to study subjects that interest them and prepare them well for their next steps. As a result, pupils engage well with their learning.
- Systems for managing teachers' performance are rigorous, and help to ensure high-quality teaching.
- Staff training is highly effective. It provides teachers and leaders with a range of opportunities to develop their practice further.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent because of the focus that all leaders and teachers place on ensuring that pupils respect each other.
- Staff work closely together to support pupils' welfare.
- Pupils receive highly effective opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- The school engages well with other providers, including those within the trust and locally, to share best practice and to maintain the high-quality provision at the school.
- Members of the trust board and of the school's local governing board challenge leaders rigorously to maintain and develop further the quality of the school's provision.
- Senior leaders check closely the impact of the school's use of additional government funding. Pupils who are eligible make strong progress due to the school's effective use of this funding to support them.
- Levels of attendance are above national figures for almost all groups of pupils.
- The quality of the sixth-form provision is good. Students' progress in the work-related subjects is above that seen nationally. While not as high, students' progress in the academic subjects is improving.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the level of attendance of all groups of pupils is consistently above national figures.
- Ensure that all students in the sixth form, including the most able, achieve as highly in academic subjects as they do in work-related subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Senior leaders and governors have very high expectations of their pupils. They have created an ambitious culture, in which they expect pupils to attend regularly, behave well, achieve highly and develop respect for all people.
- All staff share their leaders' passion that pupils should achieve well, academically and in their personal development. They are committed to providing high-quality teaching that enables pupils to engage well with their learning and to achieve their very challenging targets. Staff also support pupils effectively to ensure that they behave excellently and are well prepared for their next steps.
- These high expectations and the commitment of all staff ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently strong progress, academically and in their personal development.
- Senior leaders know their school extremely well, because of the comprehensive checks that they undertake on all aspects of the school's provision. Leaders are unwavering in their drive for further improvement.
- Where senior leaders identify any aspects of the provision that do not meet their exacting standards, they undertake rapid and robust action to resolve the issue. These actions ensure that swift improvement follows.
- Senior leaders work closely with subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and the level of pupils' achievement and support them to ensure that the provision in their subject area is of the highest quality. Subject leaders appreciate this support.
- Through their frequent checks on pupils' progress, senior leaders identify quickly when pupils are not making strong progress. On such occasions, they ensure that the pupils receive appropriate support.
- The effective leadership of behaviour and attendance ensures that pupils attend regularly and behave well. The culture of respect and the positive relationships that underpin the school's work are crucial to pupils' outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Senior leaders regularly review the impact of the use of additional government funding on the progress of eligible pupils. This includes the school's use of pupil premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium. Eligible pupils make very strong progress, because of the effective support that they receive.
- The special educational needs coordinator carefully monitors the progress and welfare of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The leader ensures that these pupils receive effective support to make strong progress, both academically and in their personal development.
- The well-designed curriculum enables pupils in key stages 3 and 4 to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad range of subjects.
- At key stage 4, a wide selection of work-related and academic subjects is available to students. This ensures that pupils can choose subjects that interest them and that

prepare them well for their next steps. This includes more academically challenging subjects for the most able pupils. The variety of subjects ensures that pupils engage well with their learning, and make very strong progress in their GCSE subjects.

- Wide-ranging extra-curricular and enrichment activities support the curriculum very well, and enable pupils to develop their learning beyond the classroom. Sporting activities, educational trips and cultural visits allow pupils to explore their own interests, develop their skills and grow in confidence.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to become secure in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different cultures and different religious beliefs. Through the weekly 'Wisdom Wednesday', pupils discuss topical events, considering fundamental British values in the process. The school's 'Ruskin Respect' award ensures that pupils respect each other's opinions.
- Senior leaders manage teachers' performance very effectively. Teachers' targets focus sharply on securing high-quality teaching to make sure that pupils make consistently strong progress. Staff fully understand that setting pupils challenging work is an essential ingredient to ensuring that pupils achieve highly.
- Teachers receive highly effective training to maintain and improve their classroom practice. Teachers regularly share best practice and observe each other teach. The school also makes good use of training that other schools offer. This includes schools within the trust and schools within the Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance.
- Furthermore, senior leaders provide teachers and leaders with opportunities to undertake research into different strategies that may serve to develop the school's provision further. These opportunities help to promote pupils' high levels of achievement and staff's high morale.
- Senior leaders support other schools, sharing the best practice that happens at Priory Ruskin with other professionals. Senior leaders are proud of the school's achievements, and wish to share them with other schools.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. The leader has a clear understanding of the quality of the sixth-form provision, and closely checks on the progress that students make. While improving, students' progress in the academic subjects currently does not match the very high outcomes that students achieve in the work-related subjects.

## **Governance of the school**

- Members of the trust board and of the local governing body are ambitious for the pupils. They are committed to ensuring that pupils receive the highest-quality teaching to help them make strong and sustained progress, and prepare well for their next steps.
- Governors challenge and support school leaders effectively.
- Governors have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, as they undertake their own checks on the quality of the school's provision. They visit the school and speak with pupils and staff. They also commission reviews from external specialists, thus ensuring that they have an objective view of how well the school is doing.

- Governors have a precise understanding of how the school uses additional government funding to support eligible pupils. They understand the impact that such funding has on the progress that these pupils make.
- Members of the trust board have a secure understanding of their safeguarding duties.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders take timely and effective action to support pupils about whose welfare they have a concern. They work well with parents and with a range of external agencies.
- Safeguarding leaders are sensitive to local issues that may affect pupils' welfare. They ensure that pupils learn how to manage their well-being should such issues affect them. Leaders use a variety of approaches well, including assemblies, the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, and visits from external agencies, including the police.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training, as well as updates on any welfare concerns that senior leaders may have about individual pupils. All staff understand their responsibility to report to leaders any safeguarding concerns that they may have. Staff are fully aware of the different signs that indicate that all is not well with a pupil.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. They say that there are staff with whom they can talk if they have a concern. They are confident that staff will listen to them, and provide them with effective support.
- Most parents who expressed a view agree that their child is safe and happy at the school, and that staff care for them well.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- High-quality teaching across the school enables all groups of pupils to make consistently strong progress across the curriculum.
- All staff have high expectations of their pupils, their attitudes to their learning and the progress that they make. Staff carefully plan learning to ensure that pupils make very strong progress.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to plan challenging activities that ensure that pupils engage well with their learning, and achieve highly.
- Teachers use information about pupils' prior learning and prior attainment effectively to ensure that the activities they set are at the right level and are suitably challenging. This makes sure that pupils make strong progress.
- Through skilful questioning, teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding. Where they identify that pupils are not secure in their learning, teachers provide effective support.
- There are strong relationships between the pupils and their teachers. For example,

pupils are willing to ask for teachers' help when they need it. Such strong relationships ensure that pupils maintain positive attitudes to their learning, and achieve well.

- Teachers regularly provide insightful feedback to pupils that enables them to consolidate what they have learned. Pupils respond well to this feedback.
- Teachers regularly set homework to ensure that pupils fully understand what they have learned.
- Teachers work well with adults who support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to ensure that these pupils make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage pupils to read. They closely monitor the books that pupils choose, to ensure that they are suitably challenging.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly ambitious. They want to do well. Through their careful planning of activities that challenge pupils of all abilities, staff enable pupils to fulfil this ambition.
- Pupils respond well to leaders' focus on promoting mutual respect. Pupils collect badges to reflect their completion of the 'Ruskin Respect' awards. These awards demonstrate pupils' achievement of aspects of the school's motto of 'aim high and show respect'. Pupils of all ages wear their badges with pride, reflecting their commitment to this ethos.
- Through the 'Ruskin Respect' awards, and the PSHE programme, pupils develop a deep understanding of the need to respect all people.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils learn to manage their emotional well-being, including their mental health. Sixth-form students gave a presentation to younger pupils about mental health and coping with stress. Pupils may approach counsellors if they are experiencing anxiety.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to live healthy lives. They know the actions they must take to be healthy, as well as decisions that may cause them harm.
- Pupils learn how to keep safe, including online and in relationships. They have received advice on what to do if they receive inappropriate messages through social media.
- Leaders are sensitive to any emerging concerns that pupils may have in relation to keeping themselves safe. They help pupils to resolve such concerns. For example, leaders have made sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe on public transport, in response to a concern that pupils expressed.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying, including racial and homophobic bullying. They say that bullying is rare at the school. They attribute this to the focus that teachers place on developing mutual respect. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, staff deal with it quickly and well. The large majority of parents who expressed a view agree with this opinion.

- The school's records confirm that incidents of bullying are extremely rare.
- Comprehensive careers advice and guidance prepares pupils well for when they leave school. As a result, over time, the proportion of pupils who do not move on to places of further education or employment with training is very low.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school site, between lessons and during social times. They move promptly to their lessons. As a result, little learning time is lost.
- Pupils from across all years get on well with each other, and behave well towards each other.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. They engage well with their learning. This is because teachers plan learning that engages the interest of their pupils, and because pupils enjoy learning. On the rare occasions that pupils lose focus on their learning, teachers are quick to bring them back on task.
- Pupils' attendance is high. For nearly all groups of pupils, the proportion of pupils who are absent, including those who are regularly absent, is below the national figures. Leaders provide close support to those pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and girls, whose attendance does not match that of others. As a result, their attendance is improving.
- Importantly, pupils who are absent from school do not fall behind in their learning. This is because of the support that they receive from their teachers to enable them to catch up quickly upon their return.
- Pupils are rarely excluded.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Pupils in all year groups make very strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum at both key stages 3 and 4.
- For the past four academic years, including 2017, Year 11 pupils have made progress that is significantly above the national average across a wide range of subjects at GCSE. This is because of the high expectations that teachers have of their pupils, and the support that teachers provide to ensure that they make strong progress.
- In 2017, unconfirmed information suggests that Year 11 pupils from all starting points made more progress than their peers nationally of the same ability. Middle prior-attaining pupils, for example, made half a grade more progress than their peers nationally, while the low prior-attaining pupils made three quarters of a grade more.
- Although they achieved well, the progress that the most able pupils in Year 11 in 2017 made did not match the very high levels that their middle prior-attaining and low prior-attaining peers achieved. The school's performance information for key stages 3 and 4 indicates that current most-able pupils are making very strong

progress across a wide range of subjects. This is due to leaders' focus on the progress of this group of pupils.

- Current key stage 4 pupils are making rapid progress across a wide range of subjects, including mathematics and English.
- Pupils are making consistently strong progress across key stages 3 and 4, including in subjects where progress was average in the past. This includes in geography and science.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 in 2017 made progress above that which other pupils nationally achieved in a range of subjects. This was due to the well-targeted support that teachers and leaders provided these pupils, including through the use of additional government funding.
- Any differences in the progress that disadvantaged pupils in key stages 3 and 4 currently make when compared with other pupils in the school are reducing rapidly. In most subjects, the progress that disadvantaged pupils make at least matches that of other pupils, whose progress is consistently strong.
- The school's performance information and the books that inspectors looked at show that a high proportion of key stage 3 pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets in a range of subjects. Performance is particularly strong in English, mathematics, art, history and technology.
- There is no discernible difference between the progress of boys and girls.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the well-matched support that they receive from teachers and support staff, and achieve well.
- Pupils in Year 11 in both 2016 and 2017 who had SEN and/or disabilities made progress across the full range of their subjects that was above that of other pupils. Current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continue to make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. This is because of the well-targeted support that these pupils receive.
- Almost all pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 11 move on to places of further education or training, including studying at the school's growing sixth form.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leaders have high aspirations for their students. They set students challenging targets, and carefully monitor their progress against them. They identify quickly when students are not making the progress that they should, and provide appropriate support. Because of this, students make good progress.
- Leaders closely check the quality of the sixth-form provision. This includes checking on the quality of teaching, students' progress and their attendance. They have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths of the sixth form and the areas for further development.
- Teachers plan learning well to ensure that they set activities that allow students to make good progress. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check students' understanding, and encourage students to think hard about their learning.



- Leaders have created a broad and balanced curriculum that enables students to study academic and work-related subjects. Students are able to choose subjects to study that fit in with their prior attainment and their career aspirations.
- Students receive impartial careers advice and guidance that they use well to help them to make decisions about their next steps when they complete their sixth-form studies. Increasing numbers of students now apply for places at university.
- In 2017, almost all students moved onto higher education, employment or training at the end of Year 13.
- Students know how to be safe, and learn how to stay safe, including online.
- Students' behaviour is excellent. They have positive attitudes to their work and to the contribution that they make to the whole school. Students take on leadership roles within the wider school community. They act as reading mentors and work closely with Year 7 pupils who are behind in their learning.
- Students who enter the sixth form without having achieved GCSE English or mathematics receive effective support to attain these qualifications. The proportion of students who go on to attain a GCSE in the relevant subject is above the national figure.
- A high proportion of students continue with their studies into Year 13 at the end of Year 12. This is because of the effective support and guidance that students receive to ensure that they choose the correct subjects.
- Levels of attendance and punctuality to school are high.
- All students have the opportunity to undertake work experience. However, not all students take full advantage of this opportunity to learn about the world of work.
- The progress that the most able students achieve is not as strong as that of other students.
- Achievement in work-related subjects is above the national average. Achievement in academic subjects, while improving, is weaker.

## School details

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Unique reference number | 136194       |
| Local authority         | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number       | 10041716     |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Type of school  | Secondary comprehensive  |
| School category                                       | Academy sponsor-led  |
| Age range of pupils                                   | 11 to 19   |
| Gender of pupils                                      | Mixed  |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes         | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll                   | 1,303  |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 202  |
| Appropriate authority                                 | The academy trust  |
| Chair   | Howard Gee   |
| Headteacher   | Rachel Wyles   |
| Telephone number                                      | 01476 410410   |
| Website   | <a href="http://www.prioryruskin.co.uk">www.prioryruskin.co.uk</a>             |
| Email address   | <a href="mailto:rwyles@prioryacademies.co.uk">rwyles@prioryacademies.co.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection                           | 7–8 May 2014   |

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Priory Ruskin Academy is a sponsor-led academy. It is a member of the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.

- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average.
- Almost two thirds of the pupils are boys.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education. She provides support to schools within the trust.
- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 63 lessons across the whole school. This included observations that inspectors conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed two assemblies and morning registration time.
- During their visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings, including with: the headteacher; senior leaders; safeguarding leaders; the head of sixth form; the literacy and numeracy leaders; subject leaders; pastoral leaders; the special educational needs coordinator; members of the trust board and the school's local governing body; and a selection of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour between lessons, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with pupils from all year groups.
- Inspectors took into account the 92 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 57 responses to the free-text service.
- Inspectors took into account the 69 responses to the online staff survey, and the 113 responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and achievement; external reviews of the school's provision; and safeguarding.
- An inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

## Inspection team

|                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| John Edwards                        | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Peter Monk                          | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Vondra Mays                         | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Jackie Thornalley                   | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Matthew Sammy                       | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Nigel Boyd, lead inspector          | Ofsted Inspector        |
| John Edwards                        | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Tracey Ydlibi                       | Ofsted Inspector        |

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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. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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