

Inspection of an outstanding school: The Priory Ruskin Academy

Rushcliffe Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 8ED

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning at this caring and inclusive school. The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement, and most pupils achieve well. Many parents speak highly of the quality of education and care the school provides. The staff know pupils very well. Pupils feel safe and well supported. They said that bullying is rare, and if it did occur they are confident the school would deal with any issues swiftly.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They show respect to each other and the staff. Pupils behave very well at break and lunchtimes. The school is calm and settled. Most pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They said that staff are fair when dealing with any conduct issues. Pupils are proud to receive 'Ruskin respect' rewards for demonstrating the school's values.

The school provides a range of high-quality opportunities for pupils' wider development. For example, pupils recently experienced a 'creative day' where they participated in engaging activities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Many are proud to be subject prefects, value leaders, and form representatives. Pupils also enjoy attending extra-curricular activities such as chess, football, netball, sci-fi club and drama.

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

The school has ensured that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum. All pupils have access to the full range of subjects in the English Baccalaureate. The school is encouraging more pupils to study a modern foreign language at key stage 4. The curriculum has been carefully sequenced so that knowledge and skills build logically over time. This supports most teachers in delivering the curriculum well. In most subjects, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Most teachers clearly explain new learning and use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. They use assessment to identify and address any gaps in learning. For example, in art, pupils get highly detailed feedback that helps them improve their work. However, teachers do not always deliver the curriculum consistently well in all subjects. This means some pupils do not always learn as well as they could in some subjects.

Most staff have high expectations of the work which pupils produce. The school has clearly set out how it wants teachers to develop pupils' writing skills. However, some staff do not always ensure that pupils present their work accurately, spell key words correctly, or use correct punctuation. This means that some pupils do not always produce high quality work.

The school uses assessment to identify pupils who need help to improve their reading. These pupils get regular support from well-trained staff. This helps them develop the skills they need to read confidently and fluently. The school effectively supports pupils with SEND. Staff get clear and detailed information about pupils' needs and how to meet them, which they use well to support pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants are also deployed effectively to support these pupils. Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum, and most achieve well.

Students in the sixth form have access to a range of vocational and academic subjects. Teachers in the sixth form use their excellent subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. Students have exemplary attitudes to learning. They engage extremely well in learning activities. Students appreciate and make good use of enrichment activities. They are very well prepared for their next steps.

The school has prioritised attendance. Pupils who need help attending school regularly get bespoke and effective support. Pupils' attendance is improving. The school has clearly set out its expectations for pupils' learning behaviours. Pupils understand and meet these expectations very well. This means pupils learn in calm and orderly classrooms.

The school has planned well for pupils' personal development. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They learn about the risks they may face in the community. They learn about different religions and cultures. Pupils understand fundamental British values and equality. They know to treat others, however different from themselves, with respect. They learn about age-appropriate and healthy relationships. Pupils enjoy a range of trips and visits that enhance the curriculum. They have meaningful opportunities to learn about

the world of work and different careers. Pupils speak very highly of the information and guidance they get for their next steps.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Most staff feel well supported and think leaders are considerate of their workload. Those responsible for governance know the school well and provide effective support and challenge. They fulfil their statutory duties well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, some teachers do not always deliver the curriculum consistently well. They do not always explain new information clearly or use questioning well. This means some pupils do not always learn as well as they could in some subjects. The school should ensure that all teachers use the school's teaching and learning framework effectively to deliver the curriculum well.
- Some staff do not always ensure that pupils present their work accurately, spell keywords correctly, or use correct punctuation. This means that some pupils do not always produce high-quality work. The school should ensure that all teachers have high expectations of the work that pupils produce and that they use the school's agreed approach to writing to support this.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2017.

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	136194
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10298461
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 sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,406
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	219
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Howard Gee
CEO	Ian Jones
Headteacher	Rachel Wyles
Website	www.prioryruskin.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 13 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Priory Federation of Academies.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school admits up to 21 students each year, based on their aptitude for sport or the visual arts.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- 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 spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and the assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, geography and science. 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 and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors visited registration sessions.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND. Inspectors spoke with pupils at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with a trustee and members of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust and other trust leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Paul Halcro, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jules Gordon

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Sheppard

Ofsted Inspector

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