

The Priory Ruskin Academy

Address: Rushcliffe Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 8ED

Unique reference number (URN): 136194

Inspection report: 16 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Inclusion is a priority for all staff. Leaders understand the needs of pupils quickly and accurately, including before new pupils start at the school. Teachers have the information that they need about pupils' barriers to learning, attendance and wellbeing. Staff, including pastoral leaders, take effective steps to remove these barriers for pupils. Leaders often do this by building effective relationships with families. They ensure that specialist support is provided when appropriate. Pupils with the lowest starting points are identified and receive personalised support to ensure that they develop the basic skills they need to support their learning. Students in the sixth form receive the support they need to select appropriate courses of study, and participate effectively in lessons.

Leaders have established clear, well-structured support for pupils known to social care. They ensure that these vulnerable pupils have the academic and pastoral support they need. Additional funding is used precisely to support pupils who face disadvantage. Strategies are well considered and informed by knowledge of what works best to support pupils' progress and wellbeing.

Leaders use of alternative provision is in the best interests of pupils with specific needs. It is carefully planned and monitored to ensure that is effective and purposeful.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Across the school, most pupils secure the key knowledge and qualifications they need to prepare them well for their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders provide personalised support for pupils, who need to secure their foundational knowledge. These programmes support pupils to close gaps quickly. Pupils' contributions in lessons, and work that they produce, shows that they are making progress through the planned curriculum. Pupils typically achieve close to national averages at the end of key stage 4. Pupils who are disadvantaged progress well from their starting points.

Students in the sixth form demonstrate commitment to their learning. They receive the support they need from teachers to achieve well in their qualifications. In the sixth form, students achieve particularly well in vocational subjects. Outcomes in academic qualifications have improved over time and are typically in line with national averages.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor attendance closely. They use information effectively to identify patterns of absence and barriers to attendance that some pupils face. This means that staff can offer targeted support early, including effective pastoral support. All staff are involved in promoting good attendance. Leaders have created a sense of belonging and community within the

school. As a result, attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been above national averages over time. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. Leaders' work with families and other professionals is helping more disadvantaged pupils to attend well.

Leaders have created a calm and positive environment. There are clear expectations and consistent routines. The school focuses on rewarding positive behaviour through a wide range of strategies. Students appreciate the recognition they get. Additional support is provided for pupils who struggle to meet the school's high expectations. Consequently, pupils behave well across the school and benefit from classrooms, where learning can take place. Sixth-form students approach their studies with maturity and independence. Pupils develop respectful and positive relationships with others. This means that bullying and discrimination are rare.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a well-organised curriculum that helps them to build knowledge and develop confidence over time. In the sixth form, leaders have designed a curriculum that reflects students' skills, interests and aspirations.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and typically explain new ideas clearly. They make helpful adaptations in lessons to support the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' work shows that they secure key knowledge in many areas of the curriculum and develop their understanding of increasingly complex content.

Approaches to assessment help teachers to identify common errors and provide effective whole-class feedback. There is a focus on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary, as not all pupils build this consistently well. Where assessment is most precise, for example, in some creative subjects, pupils receive specific guidance to close gaps in their learning.

Pupils who need help to secure their foundational skills, such as reading, receive targeted support. Teachers include activities in lessons that support the development of these skills for all pupils. Most pupils develop these basic skills over time. However, errors in some pupils' work are not identified as quickly as they could be.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their school and community well. They reinforce the school's values and underpin the positive culture at the school. Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils. Their decisions are in the best interests of pupils at the school, particularly the most vulnerable.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They use a range of information to ensure that they understand the school's strengths and areas of development. Their actions are well considered to secure improvements. Where leaders' analysis is most precise, it results in well-targeted strategies, including those that support disadvantaged pupils.

Those responsible for governance have the expertise they need to carry out their statutory duties and responsibilities. They share leaders' passion for the school community and feel valued in their role. Governors know the school well. They use a range of information to support and challenge leaders effectively.

Staff feel well supported and valued by leaders. They are proud to work at the school. Teachers, including those in the early stages of their career, benefit from a well-structured programme of professional learning and support. This develops their expertise effectively. Leaders are considerate of staff's wellbeing and workload. They have established approaches that support staff to use their time effectively.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They appreciate leaders' approach to pastoral care and communication. The school engages positively with a wide range of external agencies and partners. These relationships ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed purposeful opportunities to support pupils' personal development. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme provides opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate. Teachers are supported to deliver more complex topics. Pupils develop an understanding of the modern world, including fundamental British values, current affairs and how to stay safe online. Younger pupils have a more secure and detailed knowledge of the taught PSHE curriculum.

The school provides a range of activities that support and develop pupils' talents and interests. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, creative arts clubs and sporting opportunities. There is a targeted enrichment offer for students in the sixth form. This includes the opportunity to support the wider school community. Leaders are refining their monitoring of pupil engagement in wider opportunities across the school to make sure that all pupils benefit fully from these.

Pupils receive careers education and guidance that helps them reflect on their futures and make the right choices regarding their next steps. An increasing number of pupils engage with experiences of the modern workplace. Many pupils remain in full time education at the end of key stage 4. At the end of their time in the sixth form, most students go to university or into apprenticeships.

Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Pupils experience well-structured and inclusive pastoral care. Leaders provide targeted support, when it is needed. Pupils appreciate the care and support they receive. They feel known by staff, which develops a sense of belonging in the school community. As a result, pupils develop positive and respectful relationships with others. Instances of bullying, discrimination and derogatory language are rare. Pupils are confident that staff will take swift action to address any concerns they may have. This includes some adaptations to the taught curriculum.

The sixth-form study programme is designed to meet the needs and aspirations of students. Staff guide students on to programmes of study that build on their starting points and support their chosen next steps. This helps students join courses that suit them well, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Students benefit from high-quality teaching across a range of study programmes in the sixth form. Staff provide extra support for students who need it. This means that students enjoy their studies and achieve well. They can apply what they learn accurately in their writing and discussions with staff. Achievement in vocational subjects has been consistently above national averages over time. Leaders have taken deliberate steps to improve academic pathways. As a result, outcomes in these subjects are in line with national averages.

Students in the sixth form can engage in a range of activities in addition to their programme of study. Some students complete 'the Ruskin Award', which encourages them to commit to volunteering activities. These wider activities, alongside the planned curriculum to support personal development, enables students to be prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The Priory Ruskin Academy is a positive and inclusive community. The school's values of wisdom, curiosity, generosity, courage and passion are reinforced and celebrated regularly. Pupils are known well by staff, particularly the most vulnerable. They are positive about the support they receive from staff.

The school has a calm and productive atmosphere. Leaders have established clear routines that pupils understand and follow. This supports pupils' learning. Across the school, the curriculum is broad and well planned. It is designed effectively to build pupils' knowledge over time. Staff understand the barriers to learning that some pupils face and make sure that they are supported effectively to make progress from their starting points. As a result, the achievement of pupils is in line with national averages. Sixth-form students are taught well and receive personalised support from teachers. This helps them understand complex ideas and achieve well, particularly in vocational subjects.

Pupils feel safe and build positive relationships. There are few instances of bullying. Pupils feel confident that adults will take effective action to help them, particularly when they report concerns. This means that pupils have a clear sense of belonging and many, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, want to attend school. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving, and more pupils are now attending school regularly.

Leaders have developed a personal development curriculum that enables pupils to learn about life in modern Britain and how to keep safe and healthy. Opportunities and activities beyond the curriculum are designed to develop pupils' talents and interests. Careers education is structured and accessible. Sixth-form students have opportunities to contribute

to the school and act as positive role models for younger pupils. This helps them develop skills that prepare them for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop assessment strategies that teachers use across the curriculum, so that they consistently identify and address any gaps in pupils' key knowledge and basic skills quickly.
 - Leaders should continue to embed strategies to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly.
 - Leaders should ensure that they have detailed analysis of pupils' engagement with activities and wider experiences beyond the curriculum, so that these opportunities have a positive impact on all pupils and help them prepare well for their next steps.
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About this inspection

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.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with representatives of the trust, including the CEO, and those responsible for governance, during the inspection. Information was gathered from parents.

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.

The school currently makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including 4 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Ben Key

Lead inspector:

Helen Loader, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Alexandra Jane Burton, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Davies, Ofsted Inspector

April Wright, Ofsted Inspector

Gary Carlile, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,379

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,250

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

30.95%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.58%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.64%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	22.2%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.3%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	31.6%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	41.4	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.3	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.7	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.22	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.15	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	13.8%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	16.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	18.3%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	35.7	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.5	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.07	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.04	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	13.8%	53.1%	-39.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	16.4%	53.1%	-36.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	18.3%	52.4%	-34.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	35.7	50.4	-14.7
2023/24 (final)	35.5	50.0	-14.5
2022/23 (final)	36.5	50.3	-13.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.07	0.16	-0.10
2022/23 (final)	-0.04	0.17	-0.20

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	90%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	32.11	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.22	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27.93	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.6%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.4%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	26.8%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	30.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	29.1%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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