

Inspection of The Priory City of Lincoln Academy

Skellingthorpe Road, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 0EP

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of belonging and warmth at this school. Pupils feel safe. The school's 'global citizenship' programme is the 'lifeblood of the academy' because it supports pupils to build strong relationships and secure physical and mental well-being. Pupils are accepting of each other's differences and uniqueness.

Pupils' experiences of knowing and learning the school's curriculum is mixed. While strong in some areas, this is not the case in all subjects or across the different key stages. In some subjects, the curriculum is not clearly structured or taught well enough. Not all pupils study the full curriculum in key stage 3. However, sixth-form students have a wide choice of courses.

Leaders provide an extensive range of enrichment activities. Pupils appreciate these opportunities. Students in the sixth form take their leadership responsibilities seriously. They enjoy working with staff to develop the school, and value supporting younger pupils' understanding of how to make changes through the school council.

Pupils behave well in school. Overall, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere in most lessons. Most pupils say that if bullying does occur, it is dealt with effectively. Leaders continue to develop and embed consistent behaviour routines with the youngest pupils in school.

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

The school's curriculum does not meet the scope and ambition of the national curriculum fully. At key stage 3, too many pupils experience a narrow curriculum. They do not access a full range of subjects or have sufficient time to deepen their understanding. The number of pupils undertaking English Baccalaureate subjects is too low. Leaders recognise this. They have imminent plans to alter the school's approach to the curriculum so that all pupils will receive a broad and balanced curriculum.

Some curriculum plans have only recently been developed. Other subjects have not been implemented consistently. This means that pupils' learning is not reliably built upon in a clear, systematic way. It prevents pupils from building secure knowledge over time.

The 'Lincoln lesson' is a framework used by teachers to deliver the planned curriculum. When used well, it enables teachers to accurately assess pupils' learning and plan their next steps. However, this is not consistently embedded across all subjects.

Leaders have recently focused on helping the weakest readers in school. They have ensured that staff have received training and invested in resources to support the teaching of early reading. However, pupils receive these catch-up reading sessions instead of modern foreign languages lessons. This limits pupils' broader cultural and

curricular offer. Leaders continue to refine systems to help them to identify and assess pupils who need additional reading support.

Leaders have worked hard to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have ensured that the right staff are in place to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. These staff have received additional training. Teachers consider how they will adapt lessons. This has resulted in pupils with SEND receiving a curriculum that is matched to their needs. Leaders recognise that they need to continue to embed these strategies for continued success.

The number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced over time. Pupils understand and respect the school's approach to rewards and sanctions. Alternative provision is used well to support pupils' needs. However, too many pupils fail to attend school regularly. This creates gaps in pupils' knowledge of the school's curriculum. Leaders have been successful in reducing some persistent absence this year. However, some pupils still do not attend school often enough, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

The personal development of pupils is a clear strength of the school. It has been a fundamental part of the school's work, particularly after COVID-19. Pupils access an extensive enrichment programme of activities. This includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award, sports activities, charity work and arts, as well as cultural visits and trips. Parents and carers appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities offered. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, participate in the school's personal development offer.

The school's careers provision is particularly strong in the sixth form. It provides students with clear guidance on university, employment and apprenticeship routes. Students value this guidance and support.

Staff appreciate leaders' actions to support their well-being and workload. They value the opportunities the trust provides to develop their roles as class teachers and subject leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the welfare, well-being and safety of all pupils. They are relentless in their focus to safeguard pupils. Leaders are diligent in the safeguarding checks they make, including for safer recruitment and for school's single central record of pre-employment checks. They regularly review the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. Leaders check staff's understanding throughout the year. As a result, all staff are vigilant and aware of the risks pupils may face.

Leaders know the community and pupils well. They adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils know how to stay safe in different situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum does not enable all pupils to build their knowledge in a sequential and logical manner over time. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to revisit and repeat learning so that it is securely embedded in pupils' long-term memory. This means that too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and some find it difficult to apply what they know. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well organised and implemented consistently. They should ensure that have the knowledge and expertise to regularly check what pupils have learned.
- The school's curriculum is not ambitious for all pupils. Too few pupils have access to a curriculum that matches the breadth and balance of the national curriculum. This limits pupils' ability to make choices for their next stage in education, training and employment. Leaders should ensure that the school's curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced for all pupils.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Persistent absenteeism remains high for some disadvantaged pupils. This results in pupils missing out on school life and important learning. Leaders should review attendance systems and routines to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	135564
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10227026
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	981
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	127
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Howard Gee
Headteacher	Richard Trow
Website	www.priorycity.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 December 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed in May 2023.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with leaders from the trust, including the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, religious education, computing, French and history. In each subject, inspectors reviewed the curriculum with subject leaders, conducted lesson visits, spoke to teachers, held discussions with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils across year groups. They observed pupils' behaviour at various times of the school day, including at break and lunchtime. The school's isolation room was visited, and an inspector spoke to a representative of an alternative providers used by the school.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record.
- An inspector met with mentors of teachers new to the teaching profession.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online survey, including free-text comments. They considered the responses from staff and pupils to the respective Ofsted surveys.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, curriculum plans and information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and exclusions.

Inspection team

Stuart Anderson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
James Laming	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Hardy	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023