

Inspection of The Priory School

Neville Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 2EH

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils make excellent personal and academic progress in this inclusive school. They know the 'Priory Principles' well: pride; protect; pleasant; persevere; and proactive. These develop pupils' character and prepare them well for adult life. The school is calm and welcoming. Pupils know that they can talk to any member of staff about their work or how they feel. Pupils feel safe and supported. There is very little bullying at the school. When it does happen, or pupils perceive it to be happening, staff deal with it very well. Staff help pupils to manage their behaviour, which improves during their time at the school.

Staff model courteous behaviour and appropriate social interactions. This ensures that pupils understand how to treat others with respect.

Learning takes place in well-organised classrooms. Teachers have high aspirations for all pupils. Pupils work hard and enjoy learning.

Pupils have a wide variety of extra-curricular experiences to support their personal development. These experiences help them to develop their interests and talents. Parents and carers are positive about the care and education their children receive.

The vast majority of pupils leave the school with increased confidence and improved social skills. They are ready to take on new social and academic challenges.

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

Leaders consistently share with staff their high ambitions for pupils. Staff help pupils to manage their behaviour and specific needs. This support is highly effective and carried out with great sensitivity. Pupils receive excellent support with their learning. They achieve very well. By the end of Year 11, all gain qualifications to help them move on to colleges or other specialist settings.

Plans for learning in different subjects are coherent and progressive. In mathematics, pupils study key concepts and relate them to real-life situations. Pupils' understanding of these concepts develops strongly over time. For example, Year 8 pupils learn about place value of numbers. They learn how to record and solve problems with two- and three- digit numbers. In Year 11, pupils learn to apply this knowledge to handling money. They explore problems related to understanding finance. In art, pupils develop their knowledge of drawing skills. They learn how to use different pencils to create effects, lines and shapes. As they progress through school, they create detailed drawings and designs.

Teachers know pupils extremely well. They ask carefully planned questions to help pupils recall and build on their previous learning. Over time, pupils grow in confidence and become increasingly curious. They respond very well to the challenging work that teachers provide.

Pupils develop their cultural understanding well. They visit local theatres and businesses. They take part in charity fundraising events. They join pupils from other schools to take part in sporting and musical activities. Pupils work with professional musicians, and other local schools, as part of a local music project.

Staff provide extensive opportunities that promote pupils' personal, social and emotional development very well. Pupils take part in lunchtime and after-school clubs. Adults provide essential support for pupils' mental health. This helps pupils to discuss their feelings and anxieties. Pupils learn about different cultures, beliefs and global issues. Themed days, with an international focus, help pupils to learn about different countries. They appreciate the need to respect diversity. They can apply to hold positions of responsibility in the school. These include as members of the school council, charity leaders or online buddies. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges and opportunities of adulthood.

Leaders ensure that pupils study courses that will help them with their next steps. Leaders also provide targeted work experience opportunities. These mean that pupils can make informed decisions about their interests and future careers.

Trustees and governors are highly ambitious for pupils and staff. They believe that pupils should receive an excellent education and exceptional pastoral care. They ensure that all staff have high-quality coaching and training. Staff appreciate these opportunities to improve their practice. They feel valued by leaders and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of vigilance throughout the school. Staff know their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. They are aware of the vulnerabilities of pupils who attend the school. Teachers prioritise teaching pupils how to stay safe. This includes when using social media. Staff pass on any safeguarding concerns swiftly to a safeguarding leader.

Safeguarding leaders work well with parents and agencies. They ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders keep comprehensive records. They meet regularly as a team to discuss the support they are providing to pupils.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	142667
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10121229
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Hopkins
Headteacher	Matthew Bloodworth-Flatt
Website	www.spaldingspecialschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Many pupils have a range of social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Most have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. All have an education, health and care plan.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in January 2020. The headteacher previously held the role of Head of School.
- The school became part of Community Inclusive Trust (CIT), in March 2016.
- The school is no longer federated with the Garth School, but the two schools work closely together to share expertise.
- The school runs lunchtime and after-school clubs on the school site.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider: The Pilgrim School, in Lincoln.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and the director of education and the chief executive officer for the Community Inclusive Trust (CIT). We also met with the chair of the governing body.
- We did deep dives in: English, mathematics, physical education (PE) and health education. We met with the leaders of these subjects and visited classes from all year groups. We spoke with teachers about the lessons they deliver. We met with pupils and spoke with them about their work. We also looked at pupils' work in these subjects and others.
- We spoke with some parents informally, including by telephone. We also took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 31 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. We spoke with a variety of school staff. We also spoke with pupils about their school and took account of the one response to Ofsted's survey for them.
- We looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; overviews of the school's curriculum planning; the school's most recent published information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to safeguarding; information about behaviour management; information relating to the school's use of the pupil premium funding and funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils and minutes from meetings of the governing board.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Clive Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector

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