



The Priory LSST

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 120721
 LEA Lincolnshire

Inspection number 280881
 Inspection dates 7 - 8 December 2005
 Reporting inspector Mr Martin Cragg HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Cross O'Cliff Hill
School category	Foundation		Lincoln
Age range of pupils	11 - 18		LN5 8PW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01522 889977
Number on roll	1677	Fax number	01522 871300
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T J Coffey
Date of previous inspection	27 November – 1 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr R T Gilliland

Age group 11-18	Published January 2006	Reference no. 280881
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Priory LSST is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school serving Lincoln and the surrounding area. The school has foundation status and opened as a specialist Technology College in 1992 in a partnership between the local authority and the business community. A fixed number of places is allocated to each partner primary school for admissions. The school is popular and heavily oversubscribed. With 1677 pupils on roll, of whom 405 are in the sixth form, it is larger than average. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, of minority ethnic background and having English as an additional language are low. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and SEN statements than the average. The school is a designated Training School.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides outstanding education across the major areas of its work. Inspectors' judgements closely match those made by the school itself except for some areas of the work of the sixth form. Pupils attain exceptionally high standards overall. They make outstanding progress through to the end of Year 11 and good progress in the sixth form. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Standards of behaviour and attendance are very high and pupils' have very positive attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall and good in the sixth form, where more support for students' independent learning is required. The school strives to improve teaching continuously through regular monitoring and very effective use of its Training School status. Curriculum provision is outstanding. The school has implemented successful initiatives at all key stages to raise pupils' attainment and must continue to refine plans for its three year Key Stage 4 curriculum. Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding.

The monitoring of pupils' progress and action to tackle underachievement are exemplary. The leadership and management of the school are also outstanding. The school knows its strengths and identifies accurately areas where it can improve. It provides exceptional value for money. A very large proportion of parents returned the questionnaire and strongly supported the quality of the major aspects of the school's work. However, a significant minority feels that the school should take more account of pupils' and parents' views. The school has taken effective steps to improve since the last inspection. There are very effective links with local schools, colleges and businesses. There are impressive examples of effective action to improve performance such as the successful implementation of the two year curriculum at Key Stage 3. The school has excellent capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 1

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students make good progress as a result of good teaching. There is a wide range of academic and vocational courses which are designed to meet individual needs. These are complemented by a diversity of opportunities for personal development and enrichment in which most students participate at some time. Students have clear aspirations and mature attitudes. Very few fail to complete their chosen courses.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Senior staff ensure a clear sense of purpose and direction in all aspects of the curriculum and have the capacity to bring about further improvement.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the three year curriculum in Key Stage 4 is developed fully to improve further the quality and breadth of pupils' learning and attainment.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form to develop the independent learning skills of all students.
- Take the views of parents and pupils more fully into account to improve the school further.

Achievement and standards

The achievement of pupils is outstanding overall. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is well above the average for the end of Year 6. In 2004, by the end of Year 9, pupils achieved exceptionally high standards. Pupils' performance at the end of Year 11 was also exceptionally high. Thirty percent of grades at GCSE were awarded at either A* or A and almost all pupils achieved at least five higher grades. In 2005, results improved further at both key stages. In the last two years, the school has been placed in the top five non-selective schools nationally by GCSE results. Pupils at all levels of attainment make increasingly good progress by the end of Year 9 and outstanding progress by the end of Year 11. In 2003, pupil progress was in the top 1% of schools nationally and in 2004 it was in the top 12%. Provisional figures for the value added by pupils in 2005 indicate that it has improved yet again. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the small number with English as an additional language generally make very good progress. The school sets challenging targets for pupils and these are mostly achieved.

Achievement in the sixth form is good. The proportion of students achieving higher and pass grades at GCE A level is above the national average. Results for 2005 improved again. Students make generally good progress.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are rightly proud of the school. They are highly motivated and keen to succeed. They have a strong sense of belonging. Behaviour is usually exemplary and attendance very high. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils' respect for each other and for the school environment is very strong. They benefit from many opportunities to visit cultures abroad through strong international links. There is a strong moral emphasis to life here and pupils comply well with the school's firm guidelines. Innovative moral thinking lessons strengthen pupils' understanding of relevant issues such as bullying. Pupils raise impressive amounts of money for charity because they are caring and want to help. Involvement in the local community is not so strong and an area correctly identified for development. Pupils have been instrumental in making several changes to school practice through the school council. Their successes deserve better publicity. The range of sports activities is impressive and helps promote a healthy lifestyle. Participation is good. Lunchtime food is improving, but there are still changes parents and pupils would like to see. Pupils feel very safe and secure here and they are very well supervised during their free time. They have a good understanding of how businesses operate and are very well prepared to earn their own living. During work placements, for example, each pupil has to investigate and find a solution for a particular business problem.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is outstanding in the main school leading to exceptional progress in learning. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of teaching. Very effective assessment enables teachers to understand learners' needs and to plan accordingly. Teachers develop excellent relationships with pupils based on high expectations and positive motivation. They use exciting and varied approaches to enable pupils to achieve ambitious targets. Teachers' marking is of generally high quality. Older pupils are very well prepared for examinations.

Using very good materials, in tightly planned and timed lessons, teachers encourage pupils to broaden their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Subject-based language is applied very well, using explanation and analogies to make the meaning clear. Pupils make rapid progress as a result of being trusted to work with and to assess each other. Pupils enjoy their learning. In this Training School, there is a high degree of awareness of what constitutes

the best teaching and a commitment to continuous improvement. Teachers reflect on and strive to improve what they do. Regular observations of lessons by the senior team record the exceptional range and richness of the learning experiences offered. Teaching in the sixth form is good and has many of the qualities described above but more guidance is necessary to develop all students' ability to learn independently.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum provided by the school is outstanding at all stages. As a result of the school's specialist Technology Status the curriculum has been broadened in all subject areas, permitting pupils to develop very good levels of understanding and skills in information and communication technology (ICT), technology and design. The innovation of completing the Key Stage 3 programme of study in two years rather than three has increased pupils' enthusiasm for learning while maintaining their high standards of attainment. As a result, the school provides a wider range of courses at GCSE level. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to take AS examinations in certain subjects before the end of Year 11. Lower attaining pupils are given more time to consolidate their understanding. The school acknowledges the need for more precise structuring of this programme in order to build on the gains made in Years 7 and 8. In the sixth form, the curriculum is carefully planned to meet students' individual needs and interests. Provision has been appropriately broadened to include a number of vocational courses. There are extensive enrichment opportunities for pupils to enhance their experience outside the classroom. There is good provision throughout for careers education and work-related learning.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

Care guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. Staff know pupils well and relationships are positive and friendly. Procedures for child protection are in place and the school meets all requirements. Due care and attention is given to ensure pupils' health and safety. Personal support for pupils with social, emotional or specific learning needs, or those with difficulties outside school, is very good. Academic guidance is very strong and there are very effective systems in place to help those who are not achieving as well as they should. Careers guidance is relevant and well structured. It contains a useful business element which links well with work experience placements. Guidance for sixth

form students is good overall. However, support and structures, especially for those lacking in the confidence or ability to work independently, is not as well-developed.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Senior staff have an excellent vision for the school and very precise understanding of what needs to be done. The school's evaluation of its performance is rigorous and accurate. There are very effective management systems which involve all staff. Pupils are well represented through the school council and form captains. Managers rigorously analyse examination results and set and monitor challenging targets. Pupils' performance is assessed and monitored systematically. Effective action is taken to help pupils to achieve their full potential. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective additional help from teachers and learning assistants. Pupils from minority ethnic groups perform extremely well.

Teachers are well-qualified and appropriately deployed. Very effective timetabling enables the best use of staff and buildings. The school gives priority to reviewing the performance of teachers and advising them on how to improve. Computing facilities and other learning resources are outstanding. Accommodation is good but some teaching rooms are barely adequate for the size of some groups. The campus overall is maintained impressively. The governors discharge their responsibilities and support the school extremely well. They are very effective in providing advice and guiding developments. The governors challenge senior managers and hold the school to account. The principles of value for money are applied very effectively. Senior staff are well placed to improve the school further, as evidenced by improvements in standards and curriculum achieved since the last inspection. Whilst the school keeps parents well informed, a significant minority of parents feels that their views and those of pupils should to be taken more fully into account.

Grade: 1

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	Yes

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The Priory LSST
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9 December 2005

Dear Students

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your assistance during our visit. We greatly appreciated your comments and were very impressed with your positive attitude to the school.

The inspection found that your school is outstanding. The sixth form is good and improving. You achieve exceptionally high standards in national tests and examinations. You also make very good progress from when you join the school and enjoy your learning. Your behaviour and attendance are impressive. There are good relationships between you and your teachers. Your work is assessed thoroughly and your progress is carefully monitored. Very good support is provided to help you to improve. You benefit from a wide curriculum with a good range of choice and there are many extra-curricular activities for you to be involved in. You receive very good advice on careers and good opportunities to find out about the world of work. Your representatives on the school council and the students we met showed a mature and realistic view of the school and clearly wanted to be involved in helping the school to improve.

Although the school is outstanding in most areas of its work, we felt it could improve the quality of some teaching in the sixth form and the support given to help students develop the skills of learning independently. We also agreed with a minority of parents who want the school to take more account of your views and theirs. We found that the school council had been effective in bringing about improvements but that its work was not given the publicity it deserved. We also want the school to make the best of the new three year curriculum for Key Stage 4 by providing good opportunities for you to broaden your learning and achieve even higher standards.

We were very impressed by your contribution to the school and are confident that you can help it to improve further. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Cragg
Her Majesty's Inspector / Lead Inspector