

The Priory Pembroke Academy

Address: Croft Lane, Cherry Willingham, Lincoln, Lincolnshire, LN3 4JP

Unique reference number (URN): 145052

Inspection report: 23 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 sits at the heart of Pembroke Priory Academy. Leaders are unwavering in their mission to remove the barriers that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils face, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that every pupil feels safe and succeeds. Nothing is left to chance. Leaders know each pupil's needs inside out. They closely track the support pupils receive, including through pupil premium funding, and review it regularly to ensure that it has maximum impact. Staff adjust provision skilfully so that it makes the greatest difference. Increasingly, pupils with complex needs, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND attend school consistently, fewer are suspended and many more achieve well.

Leaders set high expectations of all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. They identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and work with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right support through a well-sequenced graduated approach. The school provides a strong range of specialist support, including well-trained teaching assistants, counselling and calming outdoor spaces. Leaders consult pupils regularly to understand what will help them most. Pupils, including young carers, have helped shape the support they receive so that it is meaningful and genuinely improves their experience. This is a school that listens, adapts and tries its absolute best to deliver for every child.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

New leaders are relentless in the mission to ensure that this school is the very best it can be. They place pupils' best interests at the centre of every decision they make. They have an absolutely accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for further improvement. Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve well and to thrive. They are passionate about the work they do and are forensic in the monitoring of pupils' progress whether this is emotional wellbeing or academic performance. Their determined actions have created an inclusive school that is increasingly valued by the community it serves.

Trustees provide a clear vision and strong strategic direction. They offer appropriate challenge and oversight and meet their statutory responsibilities effectively. The governing body is well led and brings a wide range of expertise. Governors show deep commitment to both the school and the wider community.

The school has been on a journey of improvement. Some staff have found aspects of this challenging. However, leaders have taken highly effective steps to work with staff, including teaching assistants, to ensure that they receive the professional development and encouragement they need to excel. This has significantly strengthened the school's capacity to improve provision for pupils. Many staff expressed genuine gratitude for the support they have received and the positive difference it has made. Staff express great pride to work at the school. They show deep care for the pupils and the community.

Leaders' approach to pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. They work closely together to ensure that no pupil goes without the support they need to thrive. Pupils value the wide range of adults they can turn to when they need help. They appreciate both the practical support, such as access to food and clothing, and the specialist provision, including counselling. Pupils feel safe in school and express strong confidence that staff respond quickly and effectively when they ask for help.

Pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. They speak with maturity about how they keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders have planned the PSHE curriculum with great care, ensuring that it reflects pupils' needs and the local context. They review and adapt it regularly so that pupils understand the risks that may affect them. For example, pupils learn about online risks linked to self-harm, water safety and positive mental health and wellbeing. Pupils say they learn about healthy relationships and sex education at the right time. They show a strong understanding of protected characteristics and the importance of tolerance and fairness.

Leaders create meaningful opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences, talents and interests. Pupils take part in sport, the arts and a wide range of trips and activities. The annual visit to Mablethorpe is a highlight for many. Leaders strengthen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity through visits to culturally and religiously significant sites. They also deepen pupils' understanding of fundamental British values by exploring laws, rules, democracy and decision making, including through the school council. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known to social care, benefit greatly from this provision and make highly positive contributions to the school and wider community.

Pupils receive effective careers advice and guidance, which ensures they move on to appropriate destinations when they leave

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Over time, pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11 have been close to national averages. The school's size and complexity meant that the performance of a minority of pupils had a disproportionate effect on published examination results in 2025. However, most pupils attained well across a wide range of subjects. This includes disadvantaged pupils, who typically achieve very well.

On the whole, pupils develop the literacy and numeracy knowledge they need to access the curriculum. Some pupils who find reading, writing and mathematics more challenging, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from the school's successful support and intervention to help them catch up. Leaders have identified

further improvements in the accuracy of writing as a key priority moving forward and have already started this work.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their lives. For example, in 2025 all pupils who left the school moved on to appropriate further education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' strategic actions to improve pupils' attendance is a real success story. An above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attend the school, many have complex needs. Leaders have been absolutely relentless in their actions to ensure that barriers to good attendance, some of which can be highly complex, are removed and that pupils are safe, in school and learning. Overall, pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, including pupils with SEND, has reduced significantly.

Pupils are polite, courteous and a real pleasure to meet. Most pupils enjoy their learning, value their teachers and behave well in lessons. They understand and comply with school rules and routines and show each other respect. Effective strategies are found to support pupils, some with multiple disadvantage, to manage and regulate their behaviour successfully. Behaviour can deteriorate in the few instances where teaching is not as successful as needed.

Pupils said that they do not fear bullying, harassment or discrimination and that issues such as these would never be tolerated. They feel extremely well educated about these matters, including when online, and have many staff to turn to with worries or concerns.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad and knowledge-rich curriculum. They base it on current educational research and review it regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and reflects the school's context. Across subjects, learning is sequenced carefully so that pupils build securely on prior knowledge and deepen their understanding over time.

Leaders are determined that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn to read fluently and accurately. The school's reading programme is well structured and has a strong impact. Teachers prioritise communication and language across the curriculum. They model vocabulary consistently, promote purposeful discussion and support pupils to express their ideas clearly. Most pupils use subject-specific language confidently and can explain their thinking. However, the accuracy and presentation of pupils' writing remain variable.

Leaders have taken strategic steps to strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching. Many of these actions are already improving classroom practice. Pupils revisit previous learning so that it is retained securely. Teachers make appropriate adaptations for pupils who need them, including pupils with SEND. Regular checks help leaders understand what

pupils have learned and where further support is needed. Leaders recognise that some inconsistencies remain and are acting quickly to address them.

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

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging at Pembroke Priory Academy. They describe the school as safe, welcoming and highly inclusive. Pupils value the way staff know them exceptionally well and the dedicated care they receive. They explain that this support makes a significant difference to their lives.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff provide specialist, highly effective support for pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils report that they do not worry about bullying, discrimination or harassment. They have many staff to turn to if they have concerns and trust that their teachers will resolve issues swiftly and effectively. Pupils appreciate the school's reward systems, and many spoke enthusiastically about the highlight of their week: 'chicken-burger Thursdays'.

Overall, pupils achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils achieve much better than other disadvantaged pupils do nationally. Pupils enjoy their learning and are ambitious for their next steps in education, employment or training. Staff are extremely well informed about all pupils' barriers to learning and starting points. The curriculum is scrupulously crafted to meet pupils' needs and is generally well taught.

Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about the wider opportunities the school provides. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils, and particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, can access opportunities that they may not otherwise have. Pupils take part in many sporting activities, music and the arts. They are involved in various trips, including those that enrich their understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, make a positive contribution to the wider community and to the school, raising additional funds for the prom, developing the food offer at break times and working with an artist to produce the magnificent mural at the heart of the school. Warm, nurturing relationships between staff and pupils help many pupils to thrive and achieve well.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they embed highly effective teaching and assessment across the school so that all groups of pupils make positive and sustained progress across the curriculum and achieve consistently well.
 - Leaders should continue their highly effective work to further improve pupils' attendance, and continue to ensure that pupils behave consistently well and show self-discipline and dedication to their learning.
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About this inspection

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

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.

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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. They met with the trust director of education who acted as nominee during the inspection. The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust. representatives of the trust including the chair of the trustees and the chair of the governing body.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection, a new headteacher joined the school in 2024, the leadership team has been restructured and new senior leaders, have been appointed. New governors have also joined the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

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.

Headteacher: Helen Spoors

Lead inspector:

Jayne Ashman, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Sheppard, Ofsted Inspector

Christine Horrocks, Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Long, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

591

Well below 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

600

Well below 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)

25.38%

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

7.45%

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

19.97%

Well 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)	31.1%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	42.7%	45.9%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	39.0%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	41.0	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	42.2	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.7	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)	0.03	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.10	-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)	26.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	13.0%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	22.7%	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)	35.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29.2	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	31.1	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)	-0.77	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.89	-0.57	Below

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)	26.5%	53.1%	-26.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	13.0%	53.1%	-40.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	22.7%	52.4%	-29.7 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)	35.1	50.4	-15.3
2023/24 (final)	29.2	50.0	-20.9
2022/23 (final)	31.1	50.3	-19.2

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)	-0.77	0.16	-0.93
2022/23 (final)	-0.89	0.17	-1.05

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)	92%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	88%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	100%	94%	Not available

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)	9.3%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.3%	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)	23.7%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	29.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.2%	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.

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