

Priory School

SEND Information report 2025

Introduction

Priory School is a special school for students with Complex Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD). The school takes students from year 1 (age 5) through to year 13 (age 18).

Currently there are 229 students on roll. Additionally, Priory School has boarding facilities with 23 beds, Monday to Thursday evening. 60+ students access this boarding provision during the week and most stay for one or two nights.

Included in the above numbers are:

- 6 places at Mount Road, established in September 2016 on the Priory School site. This provision caters for students with autism and SEMH needs its primary aim is to achieve their successful return to mainstream schooling for their GCSE years. Admission to this provision is via the Local Authority.
- 10 places at Priory Aspire, Established January 2022. This part of Priory caters for students with co-occurring cognition and learning needs and SEMH needs.
- 36 places at Priory at Thurston, Established October 2022. This part of Priory caters for students needing who require specialist placements for cognition and learning and/or communication and interaction needs.
- 10 places at Angel Hill college, which currently provides education for a group of year 11 students with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) who have joined Priory for 1 year.

Statement of Intent

- Our vision is to develop well-rounded individuals who can go forward into their adult lives prepared for the work environment and capable of being independent and productive citizens.
- We believe that high quality education is best achieved when the needs of each individual pupil – social, emotional, spiritual and educational – are considered to be paramount. Through focusing on pupils as individuals, we will aim to tailor challenging and enjoyable educational programmes to directly meet their needs and to truly personalise learning.
- We will work with each pupil, their parents / carers and other professionals to understand, and work to overcome, each pupil's particular barriers to learning, so they can achieve their full potential within a secure and caring environment.
- We will develop our capacity as an EEG SEND Cluster school to enhance the range of experiences available to our pupils and offer them increasing opportunities for personal, social, intellectual and physical development through both our day and residential provision. Linked to this, we will continue to work with the wider community to ensure Priory School has central place within it.
- We believe that improving the quality of education will be an ongoing process which involves monitoring, reflection and evaluation, leading to enhancement of best practice. We embrace the use of new technology to provide new opportunities for learning and teaching.
- We intend to ensure that Priory School will continue to play a significant role in promoting the development of special needs locally, regionally and nationally
- We promote politeness and mutual respect towards all members of our community and are fully committed to promoting disability equality.

Policies

Policies are <https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/who-we-are/policies-reports-and-key-information/>

Consulting parents

We recognise that most parents live too far away from school to bring their child to and from school. This can mean that parents can feel more disconnected from school.

Communication is supported by:

- Newsletters are available via e mail through Arbor and printed copies can be sent home on request
- Website <https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/send/priory-school/>
- Priory School Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Priory-School/1404918293071789
- Arbor parent portal and email is our main method of communication with all parents All students and their families will receive a termly report on progress which contains information about effort and progress in all subjects as well as progress towards achievement as outlined in the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). This is followed up by a consultation evening with staff which also provides opportunities to meet with college provision, a range of services and other providers of support for children and families.

There are 4 formal points of consultation:

- Parent and Carer Consultation evenings - 3 times a year
- Annual review of Education Health Care (EHC) plan

We welcome consultation and discussion outside these times. Parents and carers are welcome to contact the school office. Staff may not be able to take phone calls immediately, but they will get back to you or you will be able to make an appointment to speak with staff.

Supporting parents and families

We understand that having a child with additional needs can often be challenging. We arrange sessions for parents to meet other parents in an informal manner. Sometimes these sessions have a presentation or discussion led by school or invited agencies and, at other times, there is a more open forum. The Family Support Team organise these sessions, usually once a term.

Arrangements for consulting young people with SEN

Students are consulted and involved in their education:

- The students are supported and encouraged to take an active part in their annual review meeting. Occasionally, it is not appropriate due to the nature of their needs.
- All students complete a one-page profile that supports their views at the review meeting.
- The School Council meets regularly and is represented by every class. The class representatives are voted annually and a School Council Leader is voted in by students following the establishment of the council.
- The School Council meet with the Catering Team manager. They discuss menu options and new ideas brought forward by the students.
- Older students have opportunities to make options about which courses to study and Moving into Adulthood plan (from Year 9) is integral to the learning and part of the EHCP annual review.
- Activities during breaks are led by the Playleader Team and there are after school activities which students have the choice to take part in.
- There is also a Residential Council which meets regularly. All students accessing boarding take

part in the feedback meetings and discussions on a regular basis.

Arrangements for assessing and reviewing student's progress towards outcomes.

Students are formally assessed three times a year and presented to families as a developmental report. The progress is discussed with parents and carers at consultation evenings and annual reviews based on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Class teachers, subject teachers and Key Stage leads all monitor the progress of students. If they are concerned about progress, they will discuss this with other members of staff and interventions will be agreed.

Individual Learning Plans (ILP) set small steps of aspirational progress termly for students. These are reviewed regularly and discussed at the Annual Review meeting and parents and carers are able to contribute ideas and targets to this document. The targets are described for the year but are flexible to respond to any changes in progress or circumstances. These can be discussed at consultation evenings or by appointment.

Arrangements for supporting moving between phases of education and in preparing for adulthood.

As young people prepare for adulthood, outcomes should reflect their ambitions, which could include higher education, employment, independent living and participation in society.

We understand that students moving class, key stage or to other provision can feel anxious and are apprehensive about changes. For all new students to the school, we offer transition arrangements that could include our staff visiting new students in their present school, visits to Priory School with parents and often with staff from the school and attending transition week at the end of the Summer Term. In exceptional circumstances, like the recent pandemic, we may not be able to accommodate visits to other provisions or on-site visits but have added a range of videos to the school website to help support developing an awareness of the school environment.

Students moving between key stages experience a transition package including taster lessons with new teachers and tours of the learning areas. The last week of the summer term is our Transition Week when all students move to their new classes in preparation for September. From Year 9 (age 14) the annual review meeting includes the development of a transition plan known as Moving into Adulthood Plan. This is drafted in consultation with the student and their parents or carers.

The school offers work experience placements in KS4 (Year 10 and 11) and in the Sixth Form. These placements give students opportunities to try working in grown-up environments tackling real job tasks. These are organised on an individual basis and support is organised as appropriate. Priory works closely with post 16 providers and especially with West Suffolk College with whom we are also closest to geographically. In recognition that our catchment area is very large, we also encourage students and their families to look at other colleges including Suffolk New College, Suffolk Rural at Otley, Easton College, WS Training, Cambridge Regional College and other provisions as appropriate. We work closely with the various organisations who are able to provide impartial advice to students and families.

Occasionally teachers and other professionals may feel that Priory School is not best at meeting the needs of an individual student. This will be discussed with parents and carers at an early stage. If there is agreement the school may work with the Local Authority to plan more suitable provision.

This is managed through the annual review processes and always takes into account the views of parents or carers. Where a student moves from Priory School to another provision, we will work closely with the new provision to provide opportunities for safe and supported transition.

Approach to teaching children and young people with SEN

There are many approaches that staff use and the school continuously explores the latest research and innovative ways of engaging with and teaching students. There are some basic elements which characterise teaching and learning at Priory School and these include:

- Small classes, usually between 8-12 students
- High ratio of staff to students, usually 1 teacher and 1 support assistant per class
- Adaptation of the lesson content, resources and teaching so that those more able are stretched and those who need more time to consolidate are equally catered for
- Small steps in learning are planned so that students can quickly recognise their achievements and confidence that they can be successful in learning
- Consolidation/repetition of learning, usually in different contexts or situations that gives students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt, or indicate that they require more support
- Assessment, which is ongoing, consistent and provides constructive feedback to inform the next steps in learning
- Equality of access to the curriculum and activities. We have a 'can do' attitude and work to support students engaging with everything the school provides. This includes performing arts, a variety of school-based extra-curricular activities and trips and visits (including residential trips and trips abroad)
- The school has gained the Trauma Informed School award (March 2022) which recognises the approaches and support given to students and their families by staff

Adaptations that are made to the curriculum and the learning environment of children and young people with SEN

Staff constantly review the curriculum to check it is appropriate for the cohort of students' needs. The philosophy is one of "stage, not age" where we aim to deliver the curriculum that is most appropriate for the current learning needs. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing life skills:

- Reading and writing, functional literacy
- Maths skills, functional numeracy - especially telling the time and use of money
- Independence, developing ways to do more for themselves and keep themselves safe.

The school was purpose built as a Special School in the 1973 but the profile of students has changed significantly. It is built into the side of a hill and has many steps. A few of the teaching spaces are wheelchair accessible, but the majority are not.

All classrooms have interactive screens or whiteboards and some have active sound systems to aid listening and concentration.

Specialist facilities and equipment:

- Science Lab
- Art/DT room
- 2 Computing rooms and access to laptops
- Food studies room
- Gym

- Sensory room
- Outside play areas – hard surface and grass
- Greenhouse and polytunnel
- Library
- Skills Centre and Conference room

Some staff are able to sign using Makaton and BSL. We make use of software packages such as Communicate in Print and Clicker which use symbols or images to support as well as having speech feedback

Residential Provision

Priory School is one of the few special schools in Suffolk with its own residential provision. The boarding provision is inspected every year by Ofsted and has been judged as at least good for more than 10 years. There are 23 beds, with occupation from Monday to Thursday night. Very few students board all week but most access 1 or 2 nights residential provision. This means that around 60 students from across the school can benefit from one or more nights boarding across the week. The boarding provision does not appear in EHC plans. It is negotiated with the school and parents and with the local authority. Boarding is identified for specific reasons.

These are many and various but include:

- Work on independence and life skills
- Supporting personal hygiene and care
- Supporting the engagement in after school activities – cycling, canoeing, Scouts, etc.
- Supporting attendance
- Children in the care of the Local Authority and in need of some additional support
- Some students link after school where they stay for an activity and a meal before going home. This arrangement supports social integration and may also support transition to staying a night in residence.

Further information about the residential provision and the offer can be found on the school website <https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/send/priory-school/>

Expertise and training of staff to support children and young people with SEN, including how specialist expertise will be secured.

Priory School caters for a broad range of learning needs. As such, staff have a broad range of skills to work with students. Teachers are qualified and most have considerable experience of teaching. All staff receive a structured programme of training which is part of the ongoing training through the professional development training days and through the appraisal system they can access other relevant areas of training. The School Development Plan sets out the main themes of training for staff. Where a new condition or need arises, training is delivered to staff as appropriate.

Training may be:

- In-house as part of ongoing work
- During staff meetings
- During Professional Development Days
- Locally sourced within the county
- National training
- International training, where we have been able to secure additional funding, training has on occasion taken place in Europe.

Additional and specialist expertise links include access to trained therapists:

- Occupational therapy (OT)
- Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
- Physiotherapy (Physio)
- Educational Psychology (EP)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Social Care
- Disability Nursing Team and the Behaviour Support Nursing Team
- Local Authority specialist advice

Evaluating the effectiveness of the provision made for children and young people with SEN

As all students at Priory have an EHCP the effectiveness of the whole school reflects the quality of SEN effectiveness.

Priory has robust systems at all levels to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. This runs through from teachers support colleagues, senior leadership and governance.

Since September 2025 Priory is part of the Eastern Education Group Trust a multi academy trust, for more information see <https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/who-we-are/governance-and-policies/the-trust/>

The SEND Educational Excellence Committee receive reports including termly detailed reports, School Self Evaluation and the School / Trust Development Plan.

How are students enabled to engage in activities?

There is a broad range of activities available and careful consideration is given to ensure that there are engaging physical activities for students who do not normally enjoy physical activity. The curriculum is supported with many educational visits. These are local, national and European-wide opportunities. In exceptional circumstance, like the recent pandemic, not all activities have been able to go ahead. Where activities and visits are directly associated with the curriculum they are provided at no charge. Where activities are enrichment, additional to the curriculum provision, parents and carers may be asked for a contribution. Please see our Charging and Remissions Policy for more information.

We have a strong belief in offering residential experiences. Examples of activities and visits include:

- KS2 overnight camp
- KS3 residential camp
- KS5 visit to Germany
- KS3-5 Wales trip
- Sixth Form transition residential
- Lunch time and afterschool clubs
- Cycle training and Cycle 100 Challenge
- Work experience
- Museums
- Parks
- Sporting competitions

- Local businesses
- Canoeing
- Sailing
- Horse riding
- Swimming
- Orienteering
- Independent travel training

Sixth Form

Priory School has 25 places in the Sixth Form. Red and Green Pathway is catered for on the school site. Students usually stay one year but there is provision for two years for some who may need additional time before accessing college or other provision.

The curriculum is focused on:

- Functional Skills in literacy, numeracy and computing
- Art, media and culture
- Independence programmes
- Work Experience
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
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A detailed prospectus is available on the Priory School website:

<https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/send/priory-school/>

Pupil Premium

Priory makes good and innovative use of Pupil Premium funding. It supports many trips, additional resources and training. It also covers the cost of free school meals. There is a detailed report available on the website.

Post 16 Bursary

Where students are eligible for the Post 16 Bursary, the school uses this to support activities and equipment within the Sixth Form, including providing use of a laptop, school meals, residential trip, Duke of Edinburgh Award and activities.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Priory School offers the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme to all students in key stage 4 and Sixth Form. At key stage 4 students do have to opt in and pay the registration fee. The expeditions are usually carried out by canoe on rivers in Suffolk. The school offers bronze, silver and gold awards to students.

Scouts

Priory School runs its own Cub pack and Explorer Scout unit - Atlantis. This is open to any young person aged 8-10 years for cubs and 14-18 years for explorers. The cub pack and Atlantis Unit is fully included and supported by the Bury District Scouts

Transport to school

Transport may be provided by the Local Authority. Vertas organises taxi routes and provides all our home to school transport for Suffolk students. The Local Authority policy also details the arrangements for students with SEND and includes post 16 travel. Please see their policy.

Support for improving emotional and social development.

This includes extra pastoral support arrangements for listening to the views of children and young people with SEND and includes measures to prevent bullying. All students receive PSHE (Personal Social Health Education) and, in addition, they have weekly tutorial time. The smaller class sizes means that all staff have time to get to know students well and support them appropriately.

Staff training is updated regularly and includes safeguarding issues. There is a clear system for referring students for further support. Initially, in-house support (also known as early help) which may include additional mentoring time with the tutor, time with nurture staff, emotionally available or Trusted Adults and support from the Safeguarding Leads along with the Family Support Team. All staff receive training for Trauma Informed practices.

The staff daily briefing offers opportunities for sharing concerns and highlighting students who may need additional support or care. All staff are vigilant for any signs of bullying, and this is taken very seriously at all levels. For example, break times are led by Play Leaders who deliver a structured programme for those students who require additional support to socialise appropriately. Activities are planned weekly and include physical and thinking play.

Priory School embeds trauma and attachment informed approaches within the culture of the school. All staff have received Trauma and Mental Health informed training which enables them to respond to the needs of the students and families without judgment and with empathy. All staff understand that children and young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences may display behaviours which can be a barrier to learning. Staff are aware that secure relationships are essential for healing the children's minds, brains and bodies, they use key conversational skills to help the children and young people make sense of what has happened to them and help them to move forward. Priory School has a team of Trauma and Mental Health informed Practitioners (Level 5 Diploma) who have completed the 11-day Trauma Informed Schools UK course, equipping them with greater depth knowledge and skills to support the children and young people they work with. Priory School achieved the Trauma Informed Schools Award in March 2022, Priory School was the first special school in Suffolk to receive this award.

How the school involves other bodies, including health and social care bodies, local authority support services and voluntary sector organisations.

Priory School works very closely with a range of other professionals. Safeguarding is of the highest priority. All the Senior Leadership team take active roles to ensure robust safeguarding measures and procedures are applied consistently. The Safeguarding leads take the lead role in working with social care alongside the Family Support/Medical Lead.

The Director of SEND is the designated teacher responsible for Looked After/Children in Care and ensures that these students are not disadvantaged and that regular reporting to the Virtual Head takes place.

Arrangements for handling complaints

Priory wishes to resolve issues at the earliest possible point and Senior staff are available for appointments if you wish to discuss anything.

In the unlikely event that issues cannot be resolved by the school, our complaints policy is available here <https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/who-we-are/policies-reports-and-key-information/>

Key Contacts

School telephone number	01284 761934
School email address	Priory-Office@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk
School address	Mount Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 7BH
Head of School	Sharron White

Admissions

Admissions are managed the Local Authority. We have an admissions team to manage admissions and annual reviews who are contactable on sendservicessen@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk. For more information see <https://easterneducationgroup.ac.uk/send/admissions/>