

# Progress Schools – Toxteth

115 Upper Warwick Street, Toxteth, Liverpool L8 8HD

## Inspection dates

15–17 May 2018

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>              |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>              |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>              |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b>              |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b>              |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The proprietor, senior leaders, headteacher and staff have a strong vision of what they want to achieve. Leaders know what is needed to improve the school further. The dedicated staff team work hard to ensure good outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils joining the school often have large gaps in their learning because of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Once they settle into the school's nurturing and positive environment, they re-engage with learning and make good progress from their different starting points. Each pupil follows a unique personal learning programme.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and work hard to capture their interest. Because of good teaching, pupils leave school with a range of worthwhile qualifications which prepare them well for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Adults manage behaviour very well. Pupils learn how to become responsible for their own behaviour, which has a positive impact on their learning.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They feel well informed about how to stay safe.
- The school's flexible curriculum is designed to meet individual pupils' needs. It prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully.
- Leaders have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Although the school is successful in improving the attendance of many pupils, attendance is still too low for some.
- Teachers are inconsistent in applying the school rules in relation to the use of mobile phones in school. In some cases, mobile phones distract pupils from their learning.
- Occasionally, teachers do not expect enough of pupils and set work which is insufficiently challenging. In particular, there are few opportunities for pupils to write at length.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
  - accelerating the progress of pupils in English by providing more opportunities for them to write at length
  - ensuring that work set by teachers provides pupils with consistent challenge so that pupils of all abilities make strong progress
  - making sure that all teachers consistently follow the school’s policy on the use of mobile phones so that pupils are not distracted from their learning.
- Continue the drive to improve attendance by working more closely with parents and carers to support those pupils who continue to be regularly absent from school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and managers are passionate about re-engaging pupils in learning and helping them to fulfil their potential both academically and socially. This passion is shared by all staff in the school.
- Leaders and staff aim to unlock the potential in all pupils and to overcome barriers to learning, so that pupils are prepared for life beyond school.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and perceptive. Leaders know how to improve the school further.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is effective. Staff training is a priority. Leaders are aware of the need to build resilience in staff and equip them with the necessary pastoral and academic skills to teach pupils effectively. Staff receive good advice on how to improve their practice. They have access to wider training opportunities across the whole organisation of Progress Schools.
- There is an effective performance management system for all staff and regular opportunities for staff development. The performance management of the headteacher is overseen by the management board.
- Staff morale is high. Staff work together as a united team. Staff work closely with leaders and managers and know that their voice is heard.
- Senior leaders have rigorous monitoring procedures covering academic, social and behavioural aspects of school life. This enables them to closely track all elements of pupils' progress.
- Pupils follow personal study programmes within which they receive impartial careers advice as well as workplace experiences, as appropriate.
- The curriculum is designed to ensure that all pupils leave Year 11 with at least basic qualifications in English and mathematics. There is a focus on healthy eating, exercise, relationships and financial management. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are integral to all learning. Pupils understand, and are able to discuss, British values. Pupils also gain a variety of qualifications in areas such as health and social care, motor engineering, health and beauty, and sport.
- Parents voice their full approval of what the school provides, praising the support their children receive from the committed staff and headteacher. Parents appreciate the regular reports they receive about their children's progress.
- The school has a very useful range of links with outside agencies to support pupils' health, well-being and future opportunities.
- Organisations who use the school as alternative provision speak very positively about the school's work.

### Governance

- Members of the management board know the school very well. They receive weekly information regarding all aspects of pupils' welfare and education.

- The senior leaders have a wide range of experience in education, business and safeguarding. Consequently, they have the necessary skills to manage and develop the school effectively.
- The senior leaders ensure that all staff are well trained. They ensure that staff are made accountable for the progress that pupils make.
- The senior leaders are meticulous in ensuring that the school is compliant with all the independent school standards.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff training on matters relating to safety is regular, up to date and comprehensive. Risk assessments are thorough and cover all activities. Safer recruitment procedures are in place and followed closely. The site is exceptionally well maintained and secure. Pupils are regularly consulted on school matters, including those related to safeguarding policies.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers and other staff establish positive relationships so that they are able to manage behaviour well and ensure that pupils learn in a calm and positive working environment.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to probe pupils' knowledge and develop their understanding.
- Praise and positive feedback enhance pupils' self-esteem and willingness to participate and concentrate. Sometimes tasks are timed, so that pupils gain experience in working quickly. Pupils respond well to these strategies and also value opportunities to work competitively.
- Teachers know their pupils well and how to interest them. They provide pupils with work that is personalised to their needs. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and concentrate well in many lessons. When this occurs, pupils develop a strong understanding of the topics they are studying, such as in a sport lesson where pupils learned about cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength.
- The teaching of English is effective and enables pupils to make good progress. Despite this, the teaching of writing is not as effective as other aspects of English because pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to write at length. When teachers do focus on developing pupils' extended writing, many pupils rise to the challenge. For example, in a lesson designed to develop pupils' persuasive writing, pupils succeeded in writing good-quality letters to the city council of Liverpool.
- Mathematics is also taught well. Teachers provide very useful help for pupils to develop their examination technique. They also provide pupils with increasingly difficult challenges that help them to consolidate and deepen their understanding. This was done particularly effectively in a revision lesson on graphs.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together. Teaching assistants

make a very positive contribution to learning.

- Teachers' use of ongoing assessment to check pupils' understanding means that they are able to regularly adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils make progress. However, sometimes work is pitched at a level which is too low and provides pupils with insufficient challenge.
- The school policy on the use of mobile phones is not applied consistently by all staff. This means that sometimes pupils are distracted when learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils generally appreciate the work of their teachers. Pupils typically become more enthusiastic about their learning the longer they have been at the school. They grow in confidence and become more adept at tackling new challenges. Pupils who spoke with the inspector were able to identify the positive difference the school had made to their lives. They all felt that they had achieved well at the school and, as a result, felt more optimistic about their futures.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and free from harassment or bullying.
- Pupils are well informed about risky behaviours related to drug abuse, exploitation, gang culture and the dangers associated with modern technology. There is a strong focus on the safe use of the internet and social media.
- Pupils have weekly lessons that help them to understand and appreciate fundamental British values, respect and diversity. This helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on promoting the emotional well-being of pupils and create an atmosphere where pupils know they are listened to. Pupils participate in a monthly survey that captures their opinions, although they say that their requests are not always granted.
- Pupils enjoy the relaxed atmosphere at breakfast club and in different breaks during the school day. Staff share these social times with the pupils, which strengthens relationships further.
- Pupils demonstrate great respect for their working environment. The building is kept in immaculate condition and there is no litter or graffiti.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is typically good because of the positive relationships between pupils and adults. However, not all pupils follow school rules about the use of mobile phones.
- Pupils move around the building at breaktimes in a calm and orderly manner.
- The school can show strong improvement over time in the behaviour of individuals and

in the number of incidents which disrupt learning.

- Attendance overall is well below the national average. However, the school succeeds in improving the attendance of many individual pupils, some of whom have not attended school before or who have had a long period out of formal education. Nevertheless, low attendance is a barrier to learning for many pupils. School data shows that all pupils who attend regularly achieve some formal qualifications. Leaders work hard to improve attendance and follow up all absence thoroughly.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- All pupils achieve at least one qualification in English and/or mathematics. Most gain several other qualifications including BTEC National Diplomas in subjects such as sport, science, travel and tourism, and health and social care.
- The work in pupils' books and in their folders shows good progress over time. In English, pupils study a variety of different genres. Work in mathematics is impressive. It is well set out and shows growing mastery of different elements of the subject. Units of work in BTEC National Diploma subjects are well presented and include comprehensive research. All pupils currently in Year 11 have already achieved some Level 1 qualifications and are working towards Level 2 qualifications.
- Pupils develop stronger communication skills in listening and speaking and are supported to use information technology well.
- The school has a positive impact not only on academic outcomes, but also on most pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitude to learning.
- Most pupils leave Year 11 with clear destinations and continue to courses such as engineering, motor maintenance and health and social care. Some gain apprenticeships and others go straight into employment.
- The school receives positive feedback from employers who offer work experience placements to pupils. This confirms that pupils make good progress towards developing the skills that are valued by employers.
- Leaders' tracking information shows that most pupils are successful on their chosen courses and gain relevant qualifications after they leave the school.
- As a result of the school's work, pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment and for the future.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 143912   |
| DfE registration number | 341/6008 |
| Inspection number       | 10043789 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Other independent school   |
| School category                     | Independent school   |
| Age range of pupils                 | 13 to 16   |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 10   |
| Number of part-time pupils          | 0  |
| Proprietor                          | Progress School Ltd  |
| Chair                               | James Madine   |
| Headteacher                         | Sion Hughes  |
| Annual fees (day pupils)            | £9,880   |
| Telephone number                    | 0151 5411967   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>                 |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:sion.hughes@progress-schools.co.uk">sion.hughes@progress-schools.co.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school is based in Toxteth Fire Fit Hub. This facility is used as a youth centre for sports, music and culture out of school hours. The hub has a range of facilities including AstroTurf pitches, sports halls, fitness suites, gymnasias, a café and classrooms. There is also a secure outdoor space, which is a mixture of hard surface and grass. The building is owned and maintained by the fire service.
- The school has the use of two rooms as classrooms, toilets and changing rooms. The school has access to all the facilities available at the Fire Fit Hub during the school day.
- The proprietor is Progress Schools Limited, a national organisation which currently runs

eight schools.

- Progress Schools' stated mission is: 'We support the potential to achieve.' The aim of the school is to prepare pupils for further education, work-based learning and employment.
- The school caters for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded from school. The school offers full-time and part-time places. It also caters for pupils who have social and emotional difficulties, including pupils who have statements of special educational need or an education, health and care plan. The school provides alternative provision for local mainstream schools.
- A governing body of people with educational expertise support the chief executive officer of Progress Schools Limited in his work.
- The executive headteacher is also responsible for Progress Schools in Wigan and in Wirral. A senior teacher oversees the school's day-to-day operation.
- The school does not use alternative provision.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in different curriculum areas across the school. She attended the breakfast club and spoke with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The inspector scrutinised all policies and procedures in order to establish the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the head of operations, the national safeguarding lead, the headteacher, members of staff, pupils and the manager of Fire Fit Hub.
- One parent responded to Parent View, which was insufficient to generate a full report. The lead inspector spoke to two parents on the telephone.
- The views of staff were gained from meeting staff and reviewing the two responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of Liverpool City Council who is responsible for managing alternative provision.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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