

Progress Schools – Wirral

The Hive, Wirral Youth Zone, Bright Street, Wirral, Birkenhead CH41 4EA

Inspection dates

16 October 2018

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- Many of the pupils currently attending the school are vulnerable. Most have had extended periods out of education. Some pupils have been excluded from mainstream provision. Other pupils were previously disengaged from education.
- The school's proposed provision is for Years 10 and 11 pupils. All are likely to have missed significant periods of education, and some will have spent time in the local pupil referral unit. Given these factors, the school's work to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety is given paramount importance. This is shown in the school's exemplary record-keeping and precise staff recruitment and selection procedures.
- The executive headteacher and headteacher are the designated safeguarding leads for the school. Both have an in-depth understanding of the principles of effective safeguarding and child protection. All staff have ongoing training to ensure their familiarity with specialist guidance and good practice relating to keeping pupils safe in schools.
- The school's safeguarding policy is up-to-date and available on the school's website. It refers to the very latest guidelines on keeping children safe. All staff sign to indicate that they have read the school's policies and government guidelines, including part 1 of the guidance 'Keeping children safe in education, September 2018' issued by the Secretary of State.
- All staff have had 'Prevent' duty training. This is in keeping with the government's agenda to counter terrorism and radicalisation. Staff have received additional safeguarding training in a wide range of areas, including spotting the signs of domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, neglect, so-called honour-based violence, radicalisation and extremism.
- Senior leaders make sure that all necessary precautions are taken to ensure that pupils are safe when using electronic means of communication, such as computers

and mobile phones. Such precautions are detailed in the school's e-safety policy.

- The proposed course of study for pupils in Years 10 and 11 promotes healthy eating and healthy lifestyles through the personal, social, health and emotional aspects of the curriculum. Various units of study explore the dangers associated with drinking alcohol, taking illegal drugs and smoking, as well as the importance of keeping fit and engaging in regular physical exercise.
- Pupils familiarise themselves with various policies, including the school's health and safety policies and safeguarding procedures, as part of their induction. Such comprehensive induction procedures help to ensure that pupils know how to report a concern to a member of staff.

Paragraph 11, 12, 14

- The proprietor ensures that the relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up, and effective implementation of, a written health and safety policy. As with all policies and procedures, the school's health and safety policy is up-to-date. It was reviewed in August 2018.
- Weekly checks are made to ensure that buildings are well maintained. In addition, electrical equipment, power supplies and the suitability of drinking water are routinely tested. Based on such checks, action plans are created for each building. Such plans are regularly reviewed by the executive headteacher.
- Periodic inspection test certificates indicate that all aspects of fire safety, including fire alarms, fire safety signs and notices, and fire extinguishers, are fully compliant with fire safety standards and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- No pupils were observed during the inspection. They are yet to be recruited because senior leaders await the outcome of the Department for Education's (DfE) consideration of the school's material change application. The proposed staff increase, to cater for additional key stage 4 pupils, is likely to help the school ensure that pupils are always well supervised.

Paragraph 16(a), 16, (b)

- The school's up-to-date risk assessment policy is clear and comprehensive. It highlights the school's approach to keeping pupils safe both in school and when attending external events. Risk assessments cover a wide range of educational visits and school trips. For example, all risks are assessed before pupils visit the local library or engage in physical activities. All such assessments are signed by senior leaders.
- Effective partnerships with the local authority, pupil referral unit and local schools enable senior leaders to secure pertinent information about pupils before they enter the school. This helps staff to identify vulnerable pupils and minimise risks.
- Leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 17, 18, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c) 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3)

- The proprietor does not enlist the services of supply staff and does not propose to do

so if services are extended as per the material change application. Senior leaders' checks on the suitability of staff are thorough. They ensure that no prospective member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children. In addition, senior leaders make sure that no prospective employee carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act.

- The proprietor, including the director and associate directors, is not barred from regulatory activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act. All directors have had all the necessary checks made on their background and suitability to work with children.

Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The proprietor and staff are exceptionally well-organised. The single central record is thorough and up-to-date. It contains all the necessary information on all members of staff. Comprehensive electronic records include photographic evidence to confirm the identity of individual members of staff, as well as information pertaining to employment history, professional qualifications and training. All such records are held securely. Access to confidential information is strictly limited to senior leaders.
- Leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)

- Toilets at the school's new premises are suitable for the number of pupils the material change proposes. Separate toilet facilities are available for boys, girls, staff and visitors. Disabled toilet facilities are also available. There are no showers available. However, senior leaders propose that sports and physical activities will take place in a nearby premises, which is well equipped with shower and changing facilities. These premises are rented by the proprietor.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a)

- The school has a medical room which is an appropriate place for the medical examination and treatment of pupils. A bed and appropriate first-aid equipment to treat minor injuries are available.

Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b), (29)(2)

- School premises are decorated and maintained to a very high standard. The proposed classrooms are bright and spacious. Furniture, including tables, chairs and storage facilities, are all new and of good quality. External lighting is provided to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors can safely enter and leave the building.

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- Suitable washing facilities are situated next to the school's main classroom. Facilities

have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Cold water is supplied which is suitable for drinking and clearly labelled as such. In addition, water fountains are available. The temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- The school has a small outdoor area for pupils, which is suitable for recreation during breaktimes and lunchtimes. However, this area is limited in size. As part of pupils' weekly timetable, they will be able to attend a purpose-built facility, which includes a climbing wall, gymnasium and sports hall. Current pupils use these facilities.
- Leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(j)

- The standard relates to the provision of information by the school to parents and carers. Such information includes the school's name and address, the headteacher's name and contact details and the provision of various policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding.
- The school's website contains a comprehensive range of information. This includes the aims and objectives of the school, contact details and information on other schools within the Progress Schools Limited family of schools. All policies, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the curriculum, complains and health and safety, are available and up-to-date.
- Leaders have ensured that standards are likely to be met by the school if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	144856
DfE registration number	341/6010
Inspection number	10081059

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	Warren Bradley
Executive headteacher	Charlotte Baron
Headteacher	Sion Hughes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,000–£36,000
Telephone number	0151 705 8033
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	birkenhead@progress-schools.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	10–12 July 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	12 to 16	12 to 16	12 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	17	60	60

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	17	60
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	0	Not known
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	2	Not known
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	0	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	3	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	2	4

Information about this school

- Progress School is located within the premises of a purpose-built facility, which is part of the Wirral Youth Zone. Premises offer a range of additional facilities, including a climbing wall, gymnasium, sports hall and spaces for performing and creative arts.
- The school provides full-time education for up to 35 male or female pupils, aged between 12 and 16 years. It presently caters for 11 key stage 3 pupils. The school provides a short-term placement for pupils who are disengaged from education, have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from education.
- Pupils are placed at the school with the intention that they will be reintegrated into a mainstream secondary school by the end of a 12-week period.

- A few pupils have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, but none has either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school works solely with Wirral local authority, which is the referral route for pupils' places at the school.
- The school aims to 'prepare pupils for success in their new mainstream school'. It is one of six other similar schools located across the country. Progress Schools Limited are the proprietors.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative providers. Its current proposal, the basis for the material change application, is to work with a range of providers to offer long-term work-based learning opportunities and access to apprenticeships for Years 10 and 11 pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The school has applied for a material change to increase its maximum number of pupils on roll from 35 to 60. The school has already acquired an additional building to accommodate key stage 4 pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, executive headteacher and headteacher.
- The inspector toured the school's new premises with the executive headteacher and checked its suitability against the relevant independent school standards. Safety records were checked, including those relating to buildings and premises.
- Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's safeguarding, health and safety, risk assessment, behaviour, first-aid and e-safety policies.
- Checks were made to establish whether the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's single central record and the checks made on the suitability of staff. The school's work to promote pupils' safety, health and welfare was checked.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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