

# Progress Schools - Chorley

Inspire, Chorley Youth Zone, 63 Chapel Street, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1BS

## Inspection dates

11 to 13 June 2019

<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

- Progress Schools Chorley offers hope to pupils who have struggled to engage in education. They gain a chance of further education and life skills for the future.
- Leaders are professional, adaptive and dedicated to making a positive difference to pupils' lives. They are highly regarded by local partners with whom they work.
- The proprietor and executive leadership team have ensured that the independent school standards are fully met.
- Executive leaders are a highly effective team. The wider leadership team is committed to giving pupils a fresh start. However, they do not have enough accountability for school improvement and standards.
- The governing board and directors of the school makes a valuable contribution to school improvement.
- In a short time, pupils are beginning to experience educational success. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Many pupils' attendance has significantly improved since joining the school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils conduct themselves well around school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- Pupils' good mental health and well-being are a priority in school. Pupils rebuild their self-esteem in a highly supportive environment.
- The pastoral care that is offered to pupils and families is strong. Parents, carers and pupils feel that they are safe and cared for well.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers offer a good-quality, relevant curriculum and have good subject knowledge.
- Teachers do not ask sufficiently probing questions to encourage pupils to reason and think more deeply about their learning.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Pupils are hesitant readers with weaknesses in their reading ability. This has reduced their confidence and competence to access their learning effectively.

### 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 the associated requirements.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve leadership and management by developing the accountability of the wider leadership team for school improvement and standards.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
  - ask questions of pupils that encourage them to reason and think more deeply about what they are learning
  - give pupils the opportunity to systematically build and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills
  - develop pupils' reading skills so that they can successfully and confidently access their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The proprietor, leaders and governance of the school have established a provision that is making a positive difference to pupils' lives. As a result, Progress Schools Chorley is a good place to learn. Together with the whole staff team, leaders have created somewhere that welcomes vulnerable pupils and works successfully to give them a second chance to participate in further education and to better their life chances. A typical sentiment from pupils was, 'This school has given me more than hope.'
- The proprietor, governance of the school and school leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Firm, supportive boundaries help pupils to feel secure enough to learn, begin to experience educational success and restore their self-confidence.
- The school actively promotes equality and diversity. This helps pupils to become considerate, respectful and tolerant. Pupils work well in each other's company and have many opportunities to develop consideration of others in the wider community. For example, they help customers to pack their shopping bags in a local supermarket and raise money for a national young people's mental health charity.
- The executive leadership team is experienced, knowledgeable and highly organised. They accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their reflective, proactive approach is evident in a detailed school development plan. This outlines precisely how they will address those areas needing further attention. They have also developed effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- The executive leadership team have recently restructured so that a wider leadership team can take a more prominent strategic role in school. Roles have been implemented but the development of this team's full accountability for school improvement and standards is yet to be established.
- The school offers a thoughtfully tailored curriculum which effectively reflects the immediate needs of the all Year 11 cohort group that presently attend Progress School Chorley. The curriculum subjects taught include careers, current affairs, physical education and those related to developing their personal, social and emotional health and well-being. Leaders ensure that pupils see their learning as relevant to their next steps in education. For example, all pupils study English and mathematics and complete related qualifications. This has helped them build their self-worth and opened them up to the possibilities and aspirations of future careers.
- The school offers a very good enrichment curriculum. It is enhanced by access to the exceptional facilities offered by the Youth Zone. Pupils can experience climbing, boxing, and music, including sound recording, as well as benefiting from a fully equipped art room, dance studio, sports hall, fitness gymnasium and a football pitch. Where appropriate, activities are taught by a specialist instructor. Pupils also enjoy a range of trips and visits, including, most recently, indoor bowling. These opportunities make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through all the

school's activities and is a strength. Pupils respond well to talking about British values, such as tolerance, respecting differences and the rule of law. They also talk regularly about issues related to the protected characteristics, such as gender stereotyping, homophobia and racism. These discussions may be planned or spontaneous. Either way, it is evident that pupils enjoy learning to think about others and to reflect on their own views and attitudes. Pupils make a positive contribution to ensuring that the school environment is a calm and considerate place.

- The school does not receive any pupil premium funding nor additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are currently no pupils who have an education and health care plan (EHCP). However, a number of pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. The lead for the provision for pupils who have SEND has been very effective in identifying the additional learning needs of pupils and allocating suitable support within school.
- The school benefits from a close working relationship with other Progress Schools. They effectively apply their learning from one school across to the other schools run by the company.
- Leaders have an excellent working relationship with both the local authority and Inspire Youth Zone Chorley, who have a high regard for leaders' professionalism and have pupils at the heart of all they do. The school has successfully risen to the challenge of accommodating some extremely vulnerable pupils for the local authority. These Year 11 pupils have previously been out of school for a significant period, either missing education or electively home educated prior to joining Progress Schools Chorley.

## **Governance**

- Governance is provided through an executive board of directors. They share a whole-hearted commitment to improving pupils' academic, social and emotional outcomes.
- Directors use the range of their experience and expertise to good effect. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and provide appropriate challenge to leaders. They have an acute understanding of the school's effectiveness and clear plans to develop the school further. They make an active contribution to the life of the school.
- Directors know the school well and are rigorous in ensuring that it remains compliant with all independent school standards. They support the headteacher in holding staff to account and invest in staff development and training.
- Directors are diligent in carrying out their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are compliant and fit for purpose. Leaders demonstrate a high degree of expertise and knowledge of all matters relating to safeguarding and welfare.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from a safe and secure environment by promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Leaders maintain detailed safeguarding records. Staff, senior leaders and the executive

board of directors undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents on request. It is also available on the school's website.

- The school's pastoral support is excellent. Staff, overseen by the executive headteacher, who is also in charge of safeguarding and welfare, coordinate every aspect of the care that is offered to vulnerable pupils and their families. The engagement team have played a significant role in preparing pupils for school by unwaveringly allaying any fears and anxieties they might have.
- Leaders are very aware of the high level of vulnerability of the pupils in their care. They are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. These are discussed immediately to ensure risks are minimised and pupils are kept safe. Pupils' attendance is tracked carefully, and absences are followed up without delay. Strong relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are safe and that their welfare needs are met.

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

**Good**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leaders and staff have worked successfully to identify the many gaps that pupils have in their learning and ensure that barriers to learning are broken down. The combination of teachers' knowledge of pupils and their ability to build their self-esteem has ensured that the vast majority of pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Teaching is characterised by friendly, warm relationships between staff and pupils. Staff model and reinforce high expectations for pupils' learning and their behaviour. This helps pupils to work with purpose and engage in their learning.
- Teachers are particularly good at developing pupils' personal, social and emotional skills. These are taught discretely but are also woven into every aspect of learning.
- In many areas of the curriculum, teachers and support staff have good subject knowledge. They draw on pupils' prior learning and often give real-life and relevant examples to explain what is being taught. For example, pupils were very engaged in a careers session on preparing for their college interviews. They asked pertinent questions and showed a genuine desire to create a good impression at interview.
- Adults are skilful in maintaining pupils' focus on activities and are quick to pick up on those beginning to struggle. However, teachers' questioning of pupils does not routinely deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Too often, teachers' questioning of pupils is superficial. It does not encourage them to think through and reason. Additionally, pupils have limited opportunities to articulate their understanding of what they have learned.
- The development of pupils' English and mathematical skills is a high priority in the school. Provision in these subjects is focused on equipping pupils to achieve functional or entry-level qualifications because they are in their final few months of Year 11. Although, overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points, they are not learning skills, knowledge and understanding thoroughly enough to enable them to more widely apply their learning, other than in the assessment modules they complete toward their qualifications.
- Many pupils have gaps in their reading ability. This reduces their confidence and

competence to access their learning effectively. For example, pupils complete English and mathematics assessment modules via a computer programme. They struggle to read and fully comprehend the instructions given. This reduces their ability to answer the question correctly or forces them into a trial and error approach to answering. In both cases, this belies their true ability in the subject. Leaders recognise that improving pupils' functional reading is a crucial area of development and have introduced a reading initiative in other Progress Schools but not in Chorley. This initiative also focuses on reading for pleasure, comprehension and giving pupils access to a broader vocabulary.

- The information gathered about pupils is detailed and used by teachers to ensure that the tasks are matched to the individual pupil's abilities and learning needs. The knowledge that teachers and support staff have about pupils ensures that they usually plan well-prepared, motivating activities which capture their interest.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their learning much more than they used to. This is because teachers make lessons useful for their future plans and life, but also 'they care' and take the time to explain and listen to pupils.

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

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Both development and welfare are central to the work of the school. Teachers' and other adults' thorough knowledge of pupils and the strong relationships they build, ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils rebuild their confidence.
- Staff are skilled at developing positive relationships with pupils, many of whom have faced and continue to face personal challenges. Despite many of the pupils having presented with very negative feelings about school, built up from their previous educational experiences, staff have worked adeptly to help them to settle into the school quickly. The pupils in school respond positively to the learning environment that has been created.
- Pupils are warmly welcomed by staff at the start of each day. Teachers and support staff use a short session at the beginning of the day to ensure that pupils are composed and ready to learn. This makes sure that lessons get off to as good a start as possible.
- Adults model respectful and caring behaviour in the way they engage with pupils. In turn, pupils are respectful to each other. They are cooperative and relaxed in each other's company.
- Staff actively promote discussions about difference in people and lifestyles. They also encourage conversations about current events. Despite the complex needs of some of the pupils, they respond well to this. For example, pupils had an insightful, mature and animated discussion about the comparative abilities of men and women and paying everyone the same for the job they do. Male and female pupils were equally adamant that equality was important.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector felt that the school had made a significant difference to their child. They said that their children 'seem to have a new purpose in life' and as parents they now have 'peace of mind'. They commented that their child was particularly pleased that 'they were going to college' as they thought they would 'never

have this chance'. All felt that communication between home and school was excellent, commenting that, 'Staff are brilliant, they get in touch regularly, so we know how our child is doing.' They also commented that if ever they had a worry or problem, school staff would 'always get it sorted the same day'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Considering the reluctance that pupils have had in engaging in a school setting, pupils conduct themselves well around school. The school is a calm, orderly place where pupils feel safe and able to learn.
- Movement around the school is carefully and sensitively managed by adults, so there is limited opportunity for negative situations to arise. At the same time, adults are mindful of giving pupils independence. At lunchtimes they can sit in open spaces, play pool, table tennis or sit quietly away from the crowd.
- Staff promote consistently high expectations of behaviour, to which pupils respond well. The behaviour policy is adhered to by all staff, and pupils respond positively to their consistent manner. Pupils are increasingly regulating their own behaviour by stepping away from a situation, calming down and then rejoining the group.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained and supported to establish a safe learning environment in which pupils conform to good standards of behaviour. Pupils value the support they receive from staff and appreciate the measured and caring approach taken by them.
- Behaviour logs are well maintained and regularly analysed by senior leaders and governors. It is increasingly rare for a pupil to be excluded. Leaders only issue exclusions in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- Leaders have established meticulous and effective systems for monitoring absence. Pupils who attend Progress Schools Chorley have not attended school for up to two years prior to joining them. Leaders first challenge was to get pupils to come to school. The engagement team visited homes, got to know pupils and accompanied them for visits to school. This was done sensitively and with patience and understanding of the anxieties that pupils face. As a result, there have been noticeable successes with many pupils. Their attendance has significantly and rapidly improved; for others it is slowly but positively improving. The school is tenacious with those pupils who still struggle. They are given very effective support to encourage them to attend. Leaders are in regular contact with the local authority for those pupils who continue to find it difficult to engage.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils join the school with progress and attainment below their peers. This is mainly due to extended periods of missed education, negative feelings about school and difficulties engaging in education. At Progress Schools Chorley, many pupils are now attending and beginning to enjoy their learning. The first pupils only joined the school approximately 12 weeks ago. They are all in Year 11. Those who attend regularly have made good progress in a relatively short period of time from their starting points.
- Where it is available, leaders use the assessment information from the local authority and the school that a pupil has left. They assess pupils when they join the school to establish

their starting points. Pupils are then set very specific goals around their attitude and approach to learning, their personal, social and emotional development and their progress in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

- Leaders have devised a good-quality assessment system which is effective at capturing the individual progress of pupils in a range of areas. It allows leaders to keep a regular check on pupils to ensure that they make sufficient and rapid progress against their targets. Pupils feel involved in this process because teachers review and set targets with them regularly.
- A priority for leaders has been to enable the pupils to catch up swiftly and equip them with qualifications as soon as possible. This is so that they are better prepared for their next stage in education. To this end, they have put together a tailored curriculum that has led quickly to awards and accreditation. Creating a package of courses leading to qualifications has also made an important contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence in learning. All pupils are studying for at least two entry-level qualifications in subjects such as English, mathematics and ICT. Pupils typically say, 'We get to pass exams, which gives us a chance to succeed at college and have a future.'
- None of the pupils have an EHCP, nor are they identified as having SEND. However, the vast majority of pupils do have social, emotional and mental health needs. Over time, this group of pupils make good progress.
- The vast majority of pupils make good progress in those areas that were barriers to learning in their previous school. Many are regularly attending school for the first time in years. Pupils make noticeable gains in their confidence and emotional development. They are beginning to feel they can make positive choices about their life. This has helped them feel more positive about school, learning and their futures.
- The school has been conscientious in providing careers guidance. In a short space of time, leaders have worked effectively to identify pupils' aspirations and secure places in further education for pupils to pursue their goals for the future. The curriculum ensures that pupils quickly develop work-related skills, such as completing application forms, writing curriculum vitae and practicing interview techniques. Leaders and the engagement team have worked tirelessly to ensure that all pupils have an identified provision to attend next year and are well prepared for the next stage of education. Where possible, work experience placements have also been arranged. Six pupils already have confirmed places in their chosen college and a further four have interviews pending.



## School details

Unique reference number	146353
DfE registration number	888/6117
Inspection number	10092287

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 special school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	James Madine
Executive Headteacher/Headteacher	Charlotte Barton/Sion Hughes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,000 to £36,000 per annum
Telephone number	01257 447 199
Website	<a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:chorleyPS@progress-schools.co.uk">chorleyPS@progress-schools.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This small independent special school is located within the premises of a purpose-built facility, Inspire Youth Zone. The centre, which is in Chorley town centre, opened in May 2018. The building has a range of facilities, including an artificial turf pitch, sports hall, fitness suite, recording studio, gymnasium, café and classrooms. There is also a small, secure outdoor space. The building is owned and maintained by the registered charity, Onside.
- The school can provide full-time education for up to 35 male or female pupils, aged between 13 to 16 years. It presently caters for 14 key stage 4 pupils who have previously

been disengaged from education and in the past have not attended school for between 12 to 24 months. The school offers both full-time and part-time places.

- The school caters for pupils who have a range of SEND. None of the present pupils have an EHCP, although most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school works closely with Lancashire local authority, which is the main referral route for placing pupils at the school.
- The school aims 'to provide high-level supportive and inspirational teaching to 13 to 16-year-olds at key stages 3 and 4 to ensure positive progression and readiness for the world of further education, work-based learning or employment'.
- The school is one of eight other similar schools located across the country. Progress Schools Limited are the proprietors. As well as the executive headteacher and headteacher, there is a chief executive officer and a managing director with responsibility for leadership. The school also has a governing board of directors. A head of school oversees the school's day-to-day operation.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in classes. She also observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. She observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the operational executive and the executive headteacher, who is also the head of safeguarding and student welfare. She also spoke with the head of school and a member of the engagement team.
- The inspector spoke with the chief executive officer, who represented the proprietorship of the school and the governing board. She also spoke to the chief executive of Chorley Youth Zone.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils around school and talked with some pupils about their opinions of the school and their learning.
- The lead inspector took account of three responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and talked to staff during the inspection to take account of their views.
- There were no responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspector spoke on the telephone with three parents during the inspection.
- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence, including minutes from meetings of the management committee, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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