

Progress Schools – Lilford Centre

Lilford Centre, Lancaster Avenue, Tyldesley, Wigan, Greater Manchester M29 8LN

Inspection date

26 August 2020

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(c), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- Leaders have prepared an appropriate curriculum policy that includes a sufficiently broad range of subjects. The details emphasise the contribution that each subject will make to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. This approach demonstrates leaders' intention to actively provide a flexible and personalised education. The details also show that the active promotion of British values will lie at the core of the school's work. This includes values such as tolerance and respect, together with the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of being a British citizen.
- The curriculum policy is supported by schemes of work for each subject. The schemes of work and examples of the supporting long-term planning are thorough. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want the pupils to learn during their time at the school. Planning considers the specific and individual needs of pupils, all of whom are likely to be pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- There is a suitable emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics in the curriculum. Leaders also intend to emphasise speaking and listening. Leaders intend to provide pupils with learning experiences in a variety of other subjects. These subjects will include science, history, geography and religious studies. They will also include art, information and communication technology, and physical education (PE).
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education will include a timetabled weekly lesson and will be woven into the whole curriculum. This curriculum will include the development of life skills, relationships, health and sex education. The topics to be covered are suitably wide ranging and include all those that pay particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- There are schemes of work for careers education for all secondary-age pupils. Leaders intend to offer information, advice and guidance impartially. This will be tailored to the individual needs and interests of pupils.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j)

- Leaders have already recruited some of the staff. Leaders have a very clear idea of the calibre and expertise that they are looking for in their new teachers and other staff.
- No short-term teaching plans are yet in place, although templates have been created for these. Leaders will ask teachers to write these prior to the school opening. Teachers will be expected to match their subject teaching methods to the needs of the pupils. The school is well resourced with a wide range of appropriate educational books and equipment that will be appealing to the age range of pupils that the school will serve.
- The executive headteacher, headteacher and head of school are qualified and experienced teachers. They are knowledgeable and committed to providing a good-quality education for pupils. They have the knowledge and skills to support teachers, so they can provide a suitable quality of education when the school opens. The proprietors have a comprehensive induction and professional development programme that all teachers and staff will participate in.

Paragraph 4

- Leaders have a suitable assessment policy.
- The assessment policy identifies that pupils' attainment and personal needs will be assessed when they arrive at the school. Their progress and attainment will also be assessed regularly. Records are likely to be comprehensive and thorough. Teachers and leaders understand the expected progression pupils will make across each curriculum subject. Staff are mindful of the likely wide range of pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils' progress will be shared regularly with parents and carers and those responsible for governance. Teachers will use these assessments to inform their teaching.
- Pupils will have access to a range of academic and vocational qualifications according to their ability and need. This will include key stage 2 national assessments if appropriate.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Documentary evidence indicates that pupils' SMSC development is a thread that runs throughout the curriculum for the proposed provision. The school's aims, schemes of work, policies and plans for enrichment activities all have pupils' SMSC development at their core.
- The SMSC schemes of work show that pupils will learn about democracy and different faiths. Enrichment activities will be offered to all pupils to ensure that they experience

a diverse range of social and cultural activities and traditions. For example, plans are in place to help pupils to be involved in charity work and local community events.

- Schemes of work will support the development of pupils' skills, broaden their horizons, discuss local and national events, and provide experiences that will give them a balance of opposing views. Pupils will be encouraged to put into practice the values fundamental to living in Britain.
- The school's policies include positive reference to all the protected characteristics set out in legislation.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- Leaders have paid meticulous attention to the most up-to-date statutory guidance for safeguarding pupils. A suitable and up-to-date policy is in place. Leaders have put in place all the necessary arrangements to keep pupils safe and to promote their welfare at the school.
- There will be two designated safeguarding leads within the school, as well as two other designated leads who oversee all the schools within the organisation. All new staff will receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and regular updates on areas such as the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, radicalisation and extremism, sexual exploitation and e-safety.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- Leaders have detailed behaviour and exclusion policies in place. There is also an appropriate anti-bullying policy. Any incidents of poor behaviour will be logged. Leaders intend to cross-reference these with other concerns. The policy has identified appropriate and proportionate sanctions. Policies expect staff will seek to de-escalate incidents. Pupils will be taught an appropriate range of responses and skills to deal with different social situations.

Paragraph 11, 12, 13, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have a written health and safety policy that is appropriately tailored to the premises of the proposed school. It complies with all relevant laws. Regular fire-safety checks of the premises are planned. The proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Leaders have provided an array of policies to be implemented when the school opens. These relate to the following: first aid, risk assessment, fire safety and the administration of medicines. All of these policies reflect recent developments and meet statutory requirements.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. Risk assessments already completed show that leaders plan to take appropriate actions to minimise risks to pupils.
- The security and safety of pupils have been considered as part of the refurbishment of the building. For example, the proprietors have added external fencing and secured

wobbly flagstones. Additionally, written guidance explains how pupils and staff will be expected to behave and move around the school in line with COVID-19 guidance.

- Leaders have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that the school's computer network has appropriate monitoring and filtering in place to increase pupils' safety when they are online.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils will always be supervised, including at breaktimes, and when arriving at school and on leaving the premises.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders have appropriate systems in place to register pupils' attendance and allow them to monitor any pupils' absences effectively. Leaders will report on attendance on a termly basis through the governance of the school.
- The proprietors have published a suitable admissions policy for the school. Systems are in place to ensure that records of admission will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- All the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

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

Paragraph 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(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 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 single central register (SCR) is already in place and meets the requirements for the information it must contain. Leaders understand the need to complete all the required checks on the suitability of staff before they take up their appointments. The required checks prescribed in this part of the independent school standards that relate to suitability of staff have been undertaken on staff already appointed. This includes the headteacher, head of school, teacher and mentor.
- Records relating to the proprietors and governing board of directors are included on the school's SCR. All the suitability checks, including those relating to the leadership and management of a school, have also been carried out.
- A senior member of staff within the organisation is the head of safeguarding and pupils' welfare across all of the schools. The headteacher has overall responsibility for safeguarding across the proposed school. Leaders have been suitably trained to be designated safeguarding leads. Leaders have completed appropriate training to support them to appoint staff who are suitable to work in a school. Plans to recruit additional teachers and support staff are in place.

- The proprietors do not intend to operate with supply teachers. However, the proprietors and leaders are aware of the procedures that they should follow in the event of employing agency staff to ensure that these staff are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders are clear about their responsibility for checking the suitability of volunteers who might work with pupils.
- All the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- The site for the proposed school was previously a school building owned by Wigan local authority. The building has been refurbished by the proprietors and local authority to a good standard. The extensive ground floor accommodation comprises a dedicated suite of large teaching rooms that provide an appropriate learning environment. There is also a large hall, small break-out rooms, a library, kitchen, medical room, staff room and office space for school administration.
- There are appropriate toilet facilities, including two designated toilets for people with disabilities. All toilets can be secured from the inside. There is hot and cold running water. The hot water is at an appropriate temperature. There are signs indicating that the water is hot and not suitable for drinking. Pupils will have access to drinking water fountains throughout the day.
- There are new male and female changing and shower rooms.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- A medical room has been set aside with suitable washing facilities and easy access to a toilet. A bed, bedding and first-aid kit were not in the medical room at the time of the inspection, but evidence was seen by the inspector that the medical room will be completed imminently.

Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- Accommodation throughout is of a high standard and meets all requirements for the health, safety and welfare of pupils. This includes suitable acoustics and lighting. All teaching rooms have a good source of natural light. The exterior and interior lighting is of an appropriate standard. Access through main doorways and gates will be via a security keypad. Closed-circuit television recording is in operation around the outside of the building and in communal areas.

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

- The pupils will have access to a large outdoor space that is safe. It will be an appropriate space for pupils to play in when not in lessons. This space will also provide ample room for PE, in accordance with the school's curriculum requirements.
- All of the standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e), 32(3)(f), 32(3)(g)

- The proprietors have a website that provides information about all the schools within the organisation via separate pages. The website page for this proposed school will be active by 1 September 2020. The school pages that are already active are well presented and contain useful information for parents. The website demonstrates that the proprietors are fully aware of the requirements for what a school should publish on its website.
- There are suitable parents' and pupils' information packs for when pupils join. A comprehensive range of policies for parents are in place, including information on admissions, behaviour and safeguarding. All documents will be made available for parents on request from the school office. These fully reflect recent legislation.
- Leaders intend to provide termly, and annual, reports on pupils' progress and attainment to parents. Reports will be extensive and provide parents with a holistic picture of their children's academic progress. They will also report on pupils' personal development and emotional health and well-being. Leaders are aware that any inspection reports and examination results need to be made available once released.
- All the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h) 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)

- The complaints policy is comprehensive. It contains all of the required stages. It includes appropriate timescales and information about the storage and sharing of written records. The policy is robust and ensures transparency in the school's intended complaints procedures.
- All the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- The proprietors and executive headteacher have a secure understanding of the independent school standards and they plan to monitor compliance regularly and thoroughly.
- Leaders demonstrate an extensive knowledge of successfully setting up and running independent special schools. Collectively, they have a wealth of education leadership experience and a commitment to providing a high quality of education for pupils with SEND. They are likely to fulfil their responsibilities to actively promote the well-being of pupils.

- All of the independent school standards in this part are likely to be met when the school opens.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The accessibility plan fully reflects the school's statutory requirements.

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.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	148070
DfE registration number	359/6005
Inspection number	10156541

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Progress Schools Ltd
Chair	James Madine
Executive Headteacher/Headteacher	Shaun Williams/Vicky McDowell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,000 to £32,000
Telephone number	0151 559 1867
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	lilfordps@progress-schools.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	9–16	9–16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	50	50

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	50

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not known
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Not known

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	1

Information about this proposed school

- This proposed small, independent special school is located in a former Wigan local authority school building. It is spacious with its own grounds. The building has undergone extensive renovation and will be used solely by the school.
- It is proposed that the school will provide full-time education for up to 50 mixed-gender pupils, aged between 9 and 16 years. They are likely to be disengaged from education, to have been permanently excluded, or to be at risk of exclusion from education because of behavioural difficulties or non-attendance.
- Pupils are likely to have SEND and some may have an education, health and care plan, predominantly for social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school proposes to work closely with Wigan local authority, which will be the main referral route for placing pupils at the school.
- The school aims 'to provide high-level supportive and inspirational teaching to nine to 16-year-olds at key stages 2, 3 and 4'. It aims 'to ensure positive progression, to support the return to mainstream education where possible and prepare older pupils for the world of further education, work-based learning or employment'.

- The school is one of 11 other similar schools located across the country. Progress Schools Limited is the proprietor. As well as the executive headteacher, headteacher and head of school, there is a chief executive officer and other executive officers responsible for quality assurance and finance. The school has also created a local governing body, which will report to the board of directors.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely in order to reduce the length of time spent visiting the school. This is in line with COVID-19 guidance.
- This is the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive headteacher and the chief executive officer who represents the proprietors. She also met with the headteacher.
- The inspector made a tour of the school to check the suitability of the proposed premises against the relevant independent school standards. She also looked at a wide range of documents and policies, including those on the curriculum, behaviour, and health and safety. She also checked documents relating to safeguarding. Some of these documents were looked at prior to the visit to the school and some on site.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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