

Inspection of Progress Schools – Hamilton Square

60 Hamilton Square, Wirral CH41 5AT

Inspection dates: 8–10 June 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and supportive place for pupils to learn. The proprietor, leaders and staff have high aspirations for all pupils. Pupils achieve well. A high proportion of Year 11 pupils move on to further education, employment or training successfully.

Many pupils who join the school have experienced a disrupted education. Pupils who spoke with me appreciate being taught in small groups. They said that this helps them to learn more in class. Staff successfully build pupils' resilience and self-esteem. Most pupils behave well and happily get on with their learning.

Pupils told me that they are listened to and feel safe. They trust staff. Pupils know that staff will help them if they are worried about anything. Pupils report that bullying is rare, and they are confident that staff would deal with it quickly if it happened.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of vocational courses, such as in cookery, media, and health and fitness. These courses help to motivate pupils and develop their practical skills.

Parents and carers have positive views of the school. One typical comment was, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds. Staff are approachable and support him well with interviews for college applications.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils benefit from a flexible curriculum with a wide range of qualifications. Planning in most subjects, such as English and mathematics, is well developed. Leaders have identified the knowledge they want pupils to learn and when. This enables pupils to build their knowledge in each subject as they move through the school. There is an increasing focus on developing pupils' speech, language and communication skills. Pupils were able to read an unseen book confidently and fluently. The curriculum in some subjects, such as art, geography and history, has been developed more recently. The implementation of the plans in such subjects is not fully in place.

Pupils join the school at different times of the year. Leaders carry out checks that help them to identify pupils' individual needs. For some pupils, a reduced timetable helps them to settle into school. Teachers use assessment well. They revisit pupils' prior learning and use their subject knowledge effectively to provide clear explanations. This allows pupils to catch up and achieve well. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They ensure that these pupils receive suitable support. This helps them to learn well.

Most pupils have experienced periods of absence from mainstream education. The attendance of many pupils has improved due to the effective strategies used by

leaders. Staff and pupils eat together at lunchtimes. This helps pupils to build positive relationships with staff. Teachers and mentors work effectively together to ensure that all pupils are well supported. Most pupils show interest in their work and behave well in class.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils learn about citizenship, personal finance, and relationships and sex education. They show respect for people with protected characteristics. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. While pupils are tolerant of these differences, some do not yet have a deep enough understanding of religions other than their own.

Before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, pupils enjoyed the planned activities and listening to visitors, which enhanced their learning. For example, pupils learned about the risks associated with gang involvement through listening to visitors who are experts on this aspect. Pupils raise money for charities, through baking and selling cakes. Leaders intend to resume these opportunities when the restrictions are fully lifted.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They say that leaders care about their well-being. Staff value the training and support that they receive to develop their knowledge and skills further.

The proprietor knows the school's strengths and areas for development. The chief executive officer (CEO) asks appropriate questions about the quality of education. The proprietor supports leaders and staff well. This has helped the school to make a good start.

Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards (the standards) are met. All the necessary health and safety requirements are in place. Classrooms are bright and well resourced. Pupils receive helpful, impartial careers advice and guidance. They use physical education facilities at Progress Schools Wirral. The school's website provides a wide range of information about the school's policies and procedures, including the safeguarding policy. The proprietor has ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are undertaken on adults before they can work at the school. All staff receive regular, up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders take appropriate and prompt actions. They monitor pupil attendance carefully and follow absences up thoroughly. Leaders work well with other agencies to keep pupils safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when working online. Leaders regularly check the safety and welfare of pupils who sometimes attend another setting.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The changes leaders have made to the plans in some subjects, such as art, geography and history, are recent and have not had sufficient time to become embedded. This means that occasionally, pupils do not progress through the curriculum as effectively as possible. Leaders should make sure that the curriculum plans are delivered well. This will ensure that pupils know more and remember more in all subjects.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about British values. However, some pupils do not have a strong enough understanding of faiths that are different from their own. Leaders should ensure that they develop suitable plans and implement these well in order to promote pupils' understanding of the different beliefs that people in modern Britain have. This will enable pupils to be as prepared as possible for their future lives.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147468
DfE registration number	344/6003
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10193246
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Number of part-time pupils	6
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	James Madine
Headteacher	Elaine Delahunt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,000
Telephone number	0151 318 5066
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	hamiltonsquarePS@progress-schools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered by the Department for Education on 3 October 2019.
- The school provides education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools.
- Leaders work closely with Wirral local authority, which is the main referral route for placing pupils at the school.
- The school can provide full-time education for up to 60 male or female pupils, aged between 11 and 16 years. It presently caters for 36 key stage 4 pupils. Most pupils stay at the school for the duration of their studies. Two pupils in Year 11 are currently studying full time at a mainstream school.
- Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school does not receive any pupil premium funding or additional funding for pupils with SEND. None of the present pupils has an education, health and care plan. A small number of pupils are undergoing the process of having their needs assessed.
- Some pupils attend alternative provision where they follow vocational courses for two days a week. This is at Tranmere Rovers Football Club.
- Leaders and staff benefit from a close working relationship with nine other Progress Schools across the country. As well as the headteacher, there is a head of school who oversees the day-to-day operation of the school.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in my evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, I spoke with the headteacher, head of centre, head of safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and members of staff. I also spoke with the CEO, who represented the proprietorship of the school, and the governing body. I held telephone calls with a representative from the local authority and a representative of an alternative provider used by the school. I spoke with pupils and observed their interactions during social times.
- There were no responses to the online survey for pupils. Similarly, too few parents completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, for the

responses to give me a broad picture. I held telephone conversations with four parents. I considered six responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

- I checked the school's compliance with the standards. As part of this, I toured the school's premises, accompanied by leaders.
- I checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central register. I met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- I scrutinised documents, such as school policies, risk assessments and minutes of meetings concerning school governance. Behaviour and attendance records were also examined.
- I looked in detail at several subjects. These were art, English, mathematics and science. I met with staff, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. I also looked at pupils' work and curriculum plans in geography, history and PSHE education. I observed pupils reading to an adult.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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