

# Inspection of Progress Schools - Thrapston

East Northamptonshire Council House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston NN14 4LZ

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Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel safe in school. They appreciate that staff care about and look after them. Staff understand pupils and their backgrounds well. Pupils talk to staff about their concerns and know that staff will listen and provide support. They are confident that staff will deal promptly with bullying when it happens. However, leaders have not made sure that their systems to keep pupils safe are secure.

Leaders' ambitions for pupils are too low. Some pupils are frustrated that they are not studying for qualifications at a high-enough level. They are concerned this may limit their options when they move to the next stage. Pupils educated for only part of each week miss out on learning important subjects such as mathematics or English. Pupils are unsettled by recent changes in the school. They do not benefit from being taught by subject specialists.

Too many pupils behave in a way that is unacceptable and disruptive. Exclusions for poor conduct are increasing.

Pupils enjoy discussing and debating issues that interest them. They recently had the opportunity to share their views with a local member of parliament. Pupils contribute positively to the lives of others by fundraising for charities such as 'Rays of sunshine'.

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

Leaders do not pay close enough attention to what pupils already know when they join the school. They do not plan learning that is matched to pupils' needs. The curriculum is not well thought out. Leaders have only recently begun to consider what pupils should learn in each subject and when.

There have been many changes to the teaching staff. Some staff do not have the specialist knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. Sometimes, pupils' work is too easy, and they get bored. At other times, pupils struggle to understand because there are holes in their knowledge. Poor behaviour and low attendance have made the problem worse. Pupils are falling further behind in their learning.

In English, leaders have not identified exactly what pupils must learn at each stage. New knowledge is not introduced in a logical order. The mathematics curriculum is planned to follow a clear sequence. However, the planned curriculum in mathematics is not implemented well. Some pupils are given work that they are not able to do. When others have mastered a topic, they spend too long repeating work without being moved on. Leaders have recently appointed specialist teachers of English and mathematics to address these weaknesses.

In a few subjects, the curriculum is well planned and delivered effectively. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils enjoyed finding out about how tax contributes to public spending. However, pupils' attitudes to learning

are at best inconsistent. Many pupils do not take pride in the quality of their written work.

Systems to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not fit for purpose. Staff do not have the information they need to support pupils with SEND. Leaders do not ensure that pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plan) achieve their targets. Pupils with SEND do not achieve well.

There is no whole-school approach to reading. Pupils who struggle to read well do not get the help they need to become more fluent and accurate readers. Confident readers are not encouraged to broaden their reading. There is a limited range of books available in school to help pupils develop a love of reading.

Leaders commit considerable time and resources to supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils know about the benefits of living in modern Britain. They learn about equality and the importance of respecting difference. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They enjoy finding out about local community organisations such as Northampton Pride. Key stage 4 pupils benefit from one-to-one careers guidance and help to secure their next steps in education or training.

The attendance of some pupils has improved since joining the school. However, a significant number are frequently absent or only attend part time. Leaders' work to encourage these pupils to attend more regularly is having limited impact.

Most staff enjoy working at the school. However, some raised concerns about leaders' support for their workload and well-being. Staff say that the pressures they are under are partly responsible for the current staffing instabilities.

The proprietor board is poorly informed about some aspects of the school, including the quality of the curriculum and the provision for pupils with SEND. Priorities for improvement miss out key areas that need to get better. The proprietor board has not ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards. It has not met its legal duty to keep pupils safe.

Leaders do not ensure that individual risk assessments are put in place for pupils who need them as soon as they join the school. They do not pay close enough attention to information from pupils' previous schools about possible risks faced by these pupils. They do not ensure that pupils' individual risk assessments remain up to date. Risk assessments are not shared routinely with new staff or temporary staff so that they know how to minimise the possibility of a pupil being harmed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders do not always respond in a timely or effective way to concerns about pupils' welfare. Pupils' safeguarding records are incomplete. Leaders do not consistently

record their actions to keep pupils safe.

Staff have regular safeguarding training. They know the signs to look for if they are worried about a pupil's welfare or safety.

Leaders teach pupils about safeguarding risks that may exist in their local communities, including knife crime and gang culture.

The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest national guidance. It is available on the school's website.

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

- The proprietor board has not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are secure. There are weaknesses in leaders' safeguarding practices and procedures that leave pupils potentially unsafe. The proprietor board must ensure that it fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities so that there is a secure culture of safeguarding.
- Leaders do not make sure that risk assessments are put in place for individual pupils who need them. They do not review pupils' risk assessments routinely to check they are still appropriate. This leaves these pupils at potential risk of harm. Leaders must ensure that pupils' risk assessments are up to date, shared appropriately with staff and implemented effectively.
- Leaders have not made sure that the school meets the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. They do not identify and assess these pupils' needs carefully enough. They do not pay sufficient attention to the targets outlined on these pupils' EHC plans. Pupils with SEND do not get the help they need. Leaders should make sure that staff provide pupils with SEND with the resources and support they need to be successful.
- Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the curriculum. In some subjects, they have not identified precisely what they want pupils to learn or when they should learn it. They do not consider what pupils know already or take into account the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some staff do not have the specialist knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. Pupils do not gain the knowledge that they could. Some are falling further behind in their learning. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum follows a logical sequence so that pupils can build on what they know already. They must make sure that staff are well trained to deliver the planned curriculum effectively.
- Too many pupils are frequently absent. Some of these pupils refuse to attend, have been excluded or are following part-time timetables. When pupils are away, they miss out on important learning. This leaves them with gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to work effectively with pupils, their parents and carers and external agencies to help these pupils attend school regularly.

- Leaders have not prioritised reading. Pupils who struggle to read do not get the right support. More confident readers are not encouraged to read often and widely. Leaders need to make sure that there is a whole-school approach to promoting reading so that pupils read fluently and with confidence.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147697
<b>DfE registration number</b>	940/6011
<b>Local authority</b>	North Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204912
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	40
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	11
<b>Proprietor</b>	Progress Schools Limited
<b>Chair</b>	James Madine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jade Gibson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£12,360 to £29,664
<b>Telephone number</b>	01832 777089
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://progress-education.org.uk/school/thrapston/">https://progress-education.org.uk/school/thrapston/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@progress-education.org.uk">info@progress-education.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is the school's first standard inspection.
- Since the pre-registration inspection, new leaders have been appointed, including the director of education, the headteacher and the head of school. At the time of the inspection, the head of school was absent from school.
- Pupils attending the school have behavioural and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 60 pupils, aged 11 to 16 years. There are currently 40 pupils on roll.
- A small number of pupils on roll have an EHC plan.
- The school uses the services of three alternative providers. Northampton Saints Foundation and Centurion Training Solutions Ltd are unregistered. Refocus Ltd is a registered provider.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the director of education and the headteacher.
- The lead inspector met with safeguarding leaders to examine safeguarding records, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English, mathematics, history and PSHE education. They spoke to staff, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors reviewed information about the curriculum pathways followed by a small sample of pupils and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and spoke with some pupils.
- Inspectors met with support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor board.

- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including a variety of school policies, examples of pupils' independent education plans and EHC plans, individual risk assessments for pupils and information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took into account responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View and the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- In order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors considered relevant documentation and reviewed facilities at the school's site.

### **Inspection team**

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Monk

Ofsted Inspector

Damien Turrell

Her Majesty's Inspector



## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
  - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; and
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-

- 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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Piccadilly Gate  
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