

Inspection of Progress Schools - Gorton

Hideout Youth Zone, 1 Queens Avenue, Manchester M12 5PX

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

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?

Pupils feel safe and cared for at school. They enjoy developing their skills and talents in football, boxing and basketball. Many pupils excel in these sports. Pupils take a keen interest in current affairs. They discuss these with staff during breakfast club.

Staff expect pupils to behave well and be respectful. Pupils know that racism and homophobic bullying are unacceptable. Leaders and staff maintain a positive environment in which bullying, and discrimination are not tolerated.

Pupils learn how to keep fit and healthy. They know how to maintain healthy relationships. Pupils understand the harm that illegal drugs, tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption can cause. Pupils have a good understanding of the fundamental British values, including democracy and the rule of law. They develop their appreciation of cultural and religious diversity through various aspects of the curriculum.

Parents are positive about the school. They told inspectors that the school's small classes, and warm relationships with staff, help to improve their children's attendance and progress.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement. However, in some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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

Leaders, including the proprietor, have created a curriculum which is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum helps to develop pupils' knowledge and skills effectively in most subjects. Leaders encourage pupils to be positive, ambitious and productive members of society. To this end, leaders focus on enhancing pupils' language, communication and mathematical understanding.

The curriculum is logically ordered in most subjects. In a few subjects this is not the case. In these subjects, the knowledge pupils learn is ordered in a disjointed way. This limits pupils' ability to build their knowledge confidently on what they have already learned.

Assessment information is used well in most subjects to check pupils' learning. However, in some subjects, assessment systems are still developing. In these subjects, staff do not have a sufficient understanding of what pupils know and can do. This limits some pupils' progress through these curriculums.

Leaders know that reading is essential to pupils' success in education, employment and training. Teachers highlight reading in some parts of the curriculum. This helps to develop pupils' comprehension skills. However, pupils rarely read for pleasure.

Limited opportunities are available for them to read in other subjects. Staff have not received suitable training to help pupils to catch up when they fall behind with their reading skills. As a result, few pupils read fluently.

Most pupils have SEND. Many have had significant periods out of education and have gaps in their learning. Teachers are supported by specialists to make sure that pupils with SEND can access learning in all subjects. Leaders work well with different agencies, such as mental health support services, to ensure that pupils get the help that they need.

Pupils' behave well. They respect each other and staff. Pupils follow the rules during sports. They enjoy socialising during lunchtimes and sharing their ideas in class. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Staff promote pupils' personal and social development well. They help pupils to become responsible citizens. Pupils hone their cooking abilities and bake cakes to raise money for charity. In partnership with a local youth group, pupils created an exhibition focusing on the contribution of hip-hop to cultural life in Britain.

Pupils receive effective independent careers advice. They find out about the qualifications and skills needed for different education, employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Staff help pupils to learn how to present themselves well at interviews. Pupils also learn to write personal statements and applications for college placements and jobs.

Staff appreciate the wide range of training opportunities that leaders provide. Morale is high. Staff told inspectors that leaders are mindful of their well-being, workload and mental health.

The proprietor works closely with governors and staff to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. The proprietor works effectively to meet other requirements, such as the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Leaders have ensured that an effective risk assessment policy is in place. This outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders and provides a suitable framework for protecting pupils from harm.

Leaders ensure that a suitable safeguarding policy is in place. This is published on the school's website. The proprietor has made sure that the school's accessibility plan complies with the conditions of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there are appropriate and comprehensive safeguarding procedures in place. Staff receive effective safeguarding training. This helps staff to

quickly identify any possible signs of neglect and abuse. Leaders work well with external agencies, when required, to help ensure that pupils are safe.

Staff induction procedures are thorough. Leaders make sure that staff are familiar with the latest government guidelines on keeping pupils safe in education. All staff know what action to take if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare or safety.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through different aspects of the curriculum. For example, they know how to use mobile technology safely and are aware of the potential dangers of using the internet.

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

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not ordered logically. This does not help pupils to build on their existing knowledge and skills and hinders pupils' progress. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum identifies the knowledge which pupils should learn in an ordered way. This will help pupils to build their knowledge confidently on what they already know.
- In a few subjects, assessment systems are being refined. This means that leaders do not have a strong enough understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum in these subjects. As a result, teachers are not identifying gaps in pupils' learning or helping pupils to catch up if they fall behind. Leaders should ensure that there are effective systems in place to check on pupils' learning in these subjects.
- Leaders do not provide sufficient effective opportunities for pupils to learn to read with confidence and fluency. Pupils rarely read for pleasure or develop an appreciation of books. Pupils do not read as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that more opportunities are available for pupils to improve their reading knowledge. They should also ensure that staff receive appropriate support and guidance to deliver the reading curriculum effectively.

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

Unique reference number	148542
DfE registration number	352/6016
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10225761
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	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair of the governing body	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Paul Foxtton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,600 to £30,400
Telephone number	0161 5439767
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	gortonps@progress-schools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

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 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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, head of school and the director of education. The lead inspector held meetings with leaders from the Progress Schools group, including those responsible for SEND, safeguarding, attendance and pupils' welfare.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives from commissioning schools responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils read in class.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. Inspectors also spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents to gather their views about the school. He considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as free-text comments from parents, and reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents. They spoke to the designated safeguarding leads about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. They also talked with pupils about their safety and welfare and scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Bather

Ofsted Inspector

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