

# Inspection of Progress Schools - Northamptonshire

8 Notre Dame Mews, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN1 2BG

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Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent  
school standards?

**No**

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

Pupils say that they are happy and safe and that there is no bullying at their school. Most pupils like coming to school, behave well and enjoy it. Many pupils attend frequently, especially when compared to their previous school or setting. Positive relationships exist between pupils and staff. There are many adults to help pupils should they have a worry or concern.

Many pupils do not progress as well as they could. Leaders do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are not supported well enough. Pupils are not encouraged to read frequently.

Pupils do not have access to a wide variety of experiences. They are not being prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. They do not learn about faiths and cultures that are different to their own. National guidance regarding relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education is not followed. Lessons about drug and alcohol misuse are sporadic.

Pupils benefit from a small number of trips out and visitors to the school. There are few opportunities for them to develop their talents and interests.

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

The quality of the curriculum is poor. Subjects are not appropriately planned or sequenced. In places, the mathematics curriculum is taught in a logical order. For example, pupils learn about place value and the four rules of number before moving on to percentages and problem-solving activities. However, some areas of the mathematics curriculum are too broad. There is too little guidance for teachers about the small steps that pupils need to make to help them progress well through the curriculum. Staff have undertaken some training in the appropriate use of mathematical resources.

Other subjects are not well developed. It is not clear what knowledge and vocabulary pupils should learn. It is not clear what the pupils should be learning and when. Too much of what is taught is left to chance. Sometimes the work in the pupils' books does not match the schemes of work. Pupils can experience a jumbled and disconnected series of lessons. This does not help them to know and remember more.

The assessment of pupils' work and their progress is not consistent across the school. There are some assessment opportunities in English and mathematics. However, it is difficult for staff to assess accurately whether pupils have learned what they should in other subjects because the planned curriculum content is not clear enough.

Pupils are not encouraged to read frequently and to develop a love of reading. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read do not receive the support they need

to help them to become fluent readers. This prevents these pupils from accessing the rest of the curriculum as well as they could. Leaders have plans to introduce a phonics scheme and a broad selection of books. There is an appropriate reading and phonics policy, but this is not being followed.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school. Overall, they behave well. There are appropriate routines for them to follow. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand these expectations. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and fairly. Pupils say that the use of racist and homophobic language is not tolerated. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils.

The provision for pupils' personal development is weak. There is a limited personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum in place. Consequently, pupils are not learning enough about healthy relationships, staying safe and being responsible citizens. Pupils are beginning to understand some of the protected characteristics of race, disability and gender reassignment. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive careers education, advice and guidance. There are links with independent careers advisers and some lessons enable pupils to consider the world of work and employability.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive an appropriate induction to the school. There are opportunities for them to attend twilight sessions at the end of the day. These sessions allow pupils to become familiar with their new surroundings. They build up positive relationships with the staff. The individual education plans (IEPs) to support pupils with SEND are not sharp enough. They do not explain who will provide any extra support, when it will be provided and when it will be assessed. Therefore, pupils with SEND are not making as much progress as they could.

The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders do not always follow their own policies around health and safety. Their checks are not sufficient to identify possible health and safety concerns. Off-site risk assessments do not contain sufficient detail. They do not contain specific risks that are associated with the individual pupils attending off-site visits. Leaders rectified the lack of outside lighting during the inspection.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The safeguarding policy contains the most recent national guidance. It is available for parents to download from the school's website.

Staff say that leaders are sensitive to their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. They know about county lines drug trafficking and the local issues around knife crime. Records are

detailed. Leaders take swift action when a concern is raised about pupils' welfare. There are good links with outside agencies such as social care and the 'children missing in education' team.

Leaders are knowledgeable about safer recruitment procedures. Leaders know what to do should there be any safeguarding concerns about staff.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The curriculum is not well designed or sequenced. The precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary that leaders want pupils to learn and when is not clear. Pupils do not always encounter learning in a logical way that helps to build their knowledge and understanding over time. Leaders should ensure that there is clarity around the knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn, and when, across all subjects.
- There is an inconsistent approach to assessment. There is little assessment of the foundation subjects. Therefore, leaders are unaware of how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there is an effective assessment system, which is not too burdensome on staff, that provides precise information on pupils' progress in the different subjects.
- There is no coherent strategy in place to help those pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. Leaders are not fostering a love of reading. This is preventing these pupils from becoming confident and fluent readers. It prevents them from accessing the full curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there are coherent strategies in place for supporting those pupils who need help learning to read and for promoting a love of reading.
- The IEPs are not sharp enough. They contain targets for the pupils to achieve. However, they do not explain who will provide the necessary support and when, and how and when the targets will be reviewed. IEPs should contain all necessary information so that leaders can monitor the progress pupils are making more accurately.
- There is a poor PSHE curriculum in place. The national guidance around RSE and health education is not being followed. There is no curriculum for pupils to learn about faiths and cultures that are different to their own. Pupils are not being prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that there is a comprehensive PSHE curriculum in place that prepares pupils well for their life in modern Britain.
- Pupils do not benefit from a wide and rich set of experiences. There are limited opportunities for them to follow their talents and interests. Leaders should ensure that pupils have a variety of experiences and receive opportunities to develop their talents and interests.
- Leaders do not always follow their own policies. Therefore, there is a lack of consistency for staff and pupils in areas such as phonics and early reading, health

and safety and risk assessment. Leaders should ensure that their practice follows school policies consistently.

## **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>	135754
<b>DfE registration number</b>	941/6070
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204907
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	17
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	5
<b>Proprietor</b>	Progress Schools Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Charlotte Barton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jade Gibson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£12,730 to £30,552
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 970320
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:northampton@progress-schools.co.uk">northampton@progress-schools.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 to 25 May 2017

## Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was in May 2017.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the headteacher and head of school have been appointed. The previous headteacher is now the chair of the proprietor board.
- Many pupils have behavioural and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 50 pupils, aged 13 to 16 years. There are currently 17 pupils on roll.
- The school uses the services of one unregistered 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 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 held various meetings with the proprietor, the headteacher, the head of school and a selection of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, geography and PSHE. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about the school and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Curriculum plans in other subjects were scrutinised.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the single central record. Checks were made on staff's training and their knowledge of the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors looked at safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted 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)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
  - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).
- 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(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 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
  - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
  - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-



- 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
- 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

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

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 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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