

# Inspection of Progress Schools – Wolverhampton

The Way Youth Zone, School Street, Wolverhampton WV3 0NR

---

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

---

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

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 are safe here because staff know them well and take good care of them. Pupils are well informed about the risks they may face in the community and how to protect themselves from these potential dangers. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss issues that affect them.

Pupils join the school at different times during the year. Staff ensure that they settle into the routines of the school well. Most pupils have experienced disruption to their education in the past. Staff are sensitive to this. They put pupils at their ease and take time to get to know each pupil and build positive relationships. Consequently, compared with how it was when they joined the school, pupils' behaviour improves quickly. Pupils are confident that, if any bullying happens, staff will sort it out quickly. However, pupils do not do as well as they should because the curriculum, including in English and mathematics, is poorly designed and delivered.

Pupils enjoy using the extensive sports facilities on site, such as the climbing wall. Staff encourage pupils to try new activities to help build their confidence. However, pupils have limited opportunities to broaden their experiences. They are not adequately prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders have created a calm, orderly environment where pupils learn to re-engage with education. Pupils benefit from small teaching groups and caring relationships with staff. However, the proprietor body has not held leaders to account for the quality of education. Leaders have not developed nor delivered a curriculum that meets pupils' needs. As a result, the quality of education is inadequate and the independent school standards are not met consistently.

The school is located in a purpose-built youth centre, which is well maintained. Classrooms are bright and welcoming. Secure outdoor space is available for physical education and for pupils to play outside. Pupils use the on-site facilities for enrichment and sports activities during the school day. Pupils can attend the youth centre in the evenings and weekends. Leaders encourage this as a way to help pupils stay safe and to be active.

The curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics, is not well sequenced. The curriculum does not set out what leaders intend pupils to learn. As a result, pupils experience a series of muddled lessons that do not help them build on what they have learned before. Leaders have identified that pupils have significant gaps in their literacy and numeracy knowledge. Despite this, pupils only study mathematics and English for two days a week. This means that pupils struggle to recall what they have previously learned. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are not closing.

Each teacher delivers the curriculum for the majority of subjects. They have access to support from subject specialist teachers who work across all the Progress schools. Nevertheless, leaders have not made sure that teachers have the necessary subject knowledge and expertise to teach the subjects outside their subject specialisms. Consequently, teachers do not deliver the curriculum well. They do not adapt or modify their teaching to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. In addition, they do not use assessment information effectively to identify pupils' misconceptions. This means that pupils repeat the same mistakes, which further hinders their progress.

Pupils read a range of extracts from challenging texts in their English lessons. However, they do not read complete texts in class or at other times in school. This means that pupils miss out on opportunities to enjoy reading a book from start to finish. Pupils do not read frequently or for pleasure because it is not promoted in school. There is currently no systematic approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers do not have the expertise they need to identify and address gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is limited because gaps in their reading skills are not identified accurately and addressed rapidly enough.

Pupils benefit from independent careers education, advice and guidance. Leaders help to ensure that pupils have a college place, employment or training opportunity when they leave the school at the end of Year 11. However, pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils do not have enough meaningful opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society. Pupils do not have a strong grasp of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The proprietor body has failed to ensure that several of the independent schools standards are met. The proprietor body has ensured that the school complies with section 10 of the Equality Act 2010. An accessibility plan is in place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented robust safeguarding procedures. Staff can spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know pupils well and report concerns promptly. Leaders proactively engage with the local safeguarding partnership, and work closely with pupils' home schools and other agencies to keep pupils safe. Pupils learn how to avoid risks online and in the community from lessons and external speakers, including the police. Checks on staff are completed and recorded appropriately

The safeguarding policy is fit for purpose. It is available on the school's website. It considers the most recent guidance from the Department for Education (DfE).

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

- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics, is well sequenced. It does not set out what leaders intend pupils to learn. As a result, pupils do not develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum in English and mathematics sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in a logical sequence. Leaders need to make sure that, regardless of pupils' starting points, pupils make strong and sustained progress in mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils spend enough time learning English and mathematics. This means that pupils struggle to recall what they have previously learned and the significant gaps in their knowledge are not closing. Leaders should ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to recall, consolidate and apply their learning in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers have the subject knowledge and expertise to teach the subjects outside their specialism. They have not provided teachers with adequate support and training. As a result, teachers do not know how to use assessment information to identify next steps in pupils' learning effectively and adapt their teaching to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. This means that pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise they need to teach all subjects well and that they know how to use assessment information to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- There is currently no systematic approach to the teaching of reading. As a result, pupils' progress is limited because gaps in their reading skills are not identified accurately or addressed rapidly enough. Teachers do not have the expertise to identify or address these gaps. Leaders need to ensure that a systematic approach to the assessment and teaching of reading is implemented, and that staff are trained to deliver this effectively.
- Pupils are not prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. Pupils have few meaningful opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society. This means that pupils do not have a strong grasp of the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, tolerance and individual liberty. Leaders should ensure that opportunities are deliberately planned for pupils to have the rich experiences they need to make a positive contribution to society.
- The proprietor body has not held leaders to account for the quality of education. Leaders have not checked that the curriculum meets pupils' needs or that it is well implemented. As a result, the quality of education is inadequate and the independent school standards are not met consistently. The proprietor must ensure that leaders have the knowledge and expertise to plan a well-sequenced curriculum that meets pupils' needs and ensure that it is delivered 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148643
<b>DfE registration number</b>	336/6008
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10220462
<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>	6
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Progress Schools Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Charlotte Barton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jamie McMahon
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£12,370 to £30,552
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 229923
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:wolverhamptonps@progress-education.org.uk">wolverhamptonps@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 headteacher was absent from school. The post of managing director is currently filled by an interim appointment.
- Pupils attending the school have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 30 pupils, aged 11 to 16 years. There are currently 6 pupils on roll.
- No pupils on roll have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not use any 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 met with the director of education and the head of school at various points throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the interim managing director as the representative of the proprietor body.
- The lead inspector met with central office leaders to examine safeguarding records, safer recruitment and the school's single central record.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors heard pupils reading in lessons and talked to them about reading.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and spoke to pupils about behaviour, safeguarding and bullying.

- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, curriculum documents, health and safety and fire records, individual risk assessments for pupils, and information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, or the pupil and staff questionnaires. An inspector spoke to a small number of parents and carers on the telephone.
- The lead inspector spoke to staff from three schools who had placed pupils at the school.
- The lead inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards by reviewing relevant documentation and checking the facilities on site.

### **Inspection team**

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Peter Humphries

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; and
    - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
    - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
    - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 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;
  - 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;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
  - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

## **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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022