

Inspection of Progress Schools - Wirral

The Hive, Bright Street, Wirral CH41 4EA

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They like to play different sports and to socialise with their friends. Pupils feel happy and safe. They know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have any worries or concerns.

Staff expect pupils to do well in their studies and to behave well. When pupils join the school, they improve their behaviour as well as their engagement and success in learning. Most pupils are ready to reintegrate into mainstream schools after a short period, as a result of leaders' and staff's effective work.

If bullying happens, staff deal with it immediately. Pupils are aware of the harm that discriminatory behaviour such as racism, homophobia and sexism can cause. Staff make sure that no such discriminatory behaviour takes place in school.

Pupils are encouraged to become active and responsible citizens. They like to give their points of view on the pupils' forum, and to raise funds for various charities.

Pupils learn about cultural and religious diversity through different aspects of the curriculum. They understand the importance of British values, including respect and tolerance, and celebrate different cultural events. Pupils enjoy educational trips to local places of interest, including art galleries and museums.

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

Leaders and the proprietor body have created a logically ordered curriculum, which identifies the knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to acquire. Staff focus on improving pupils' language, communication and mathematical skills. Their high expectations help to ensure that most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), acquire new knowledge in most subjects.

Typically, teachers check that pupils have learned what has been taught. In most subjects, the curriculum is delivered well and in the intended order. However, this is not the case in all subjects. In a few subjects, the curriculum is less well organised. In these subjects, pupils are not learning as well as they should. This is because the curriculum does not build sufficiently well on what pupils already know and understand.

In a small minority of subjects, teachers are developing their subject knowledge and confidence in implementing the curriculum. As a result, in these subjects, the curriculum is not delivered as well as it could be. This makes it hard for pupils to learn and remember some of the important subject knowledge.

Leaders understand the importance of developing pupils' fluency in reading. They provide different opportunities for pupils to enhance their reading skills. For example, each

morning pupils are encouraged to read about topical issues during current affairs sessions. Pupils also read for pleasure. Pupils who read for the lead inspector did so confidently. They demonstrated a strong comprehension of the themes in their books and sporting magazines. Pupils who need extra help to improve their phonics knowledge and reading skills are supported effectively by experienced staff.

Pupils with SEND are identified by staff as soon as they start at the school. Specialist staff support teaching staff to understand pupils' needs. Staff work closely with parents, and external professionals, to ensure that pupils get the help that they need to access the curriculum.

Staff are trained well to manage pupils' behaviour. All staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently well. They also help pupils to manage their own feelings and emotions. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves soon after starting at the school. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Leaders have implemented the statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). Pupils learn how to stay healthy. They appreciate the importance of physical fitness and good nutrition. Pupils also learn how to look after their mental health. In addition, visiting speakers help to raise their awareness of the serious risks connected with carrying weapons, such as knives. Pupils study British institutions and learn to respect the rule of law. Pupils are encouraged to pursue their interests in different sports, including football and basketball. Some pupils enjoy baking and honing their cooking skills.

Pupils benefit from in-house and independent careers advice. This helps to raise their understanding of the qualifications and skills required for different education, training and employment opportunities.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They told inspectors that leaders are mindful of their mental health and well-being.

The proprietor body works closely with the chair of the governing body. Together, they have ensured that the independent school standards are met. They have also made sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. They carry out their leadership roles effectively. For example, the written risk assessment policy clearly indicates the responsibilities of leaders and staff and provides a fitting framework to minimise risk and dangers to pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are trained to a high standard. They regularly update staff on developments relating to pupils' welfare and safety. They ensure that staff are familiar with the government's latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education.

Staff are skilled at spotting potential signs of neglect and abuse. They quickly raise concerns if they are worried about pupils. Leaders work with different external partners to make sure that pupils get the help that they need quickly.

Pupils learn about dangers and risks, including the potential dangers of gang affiliation. They learn about safe and healthy relationships through the RSHE curriculum.

The school's safeguarding policy is suitable and meets statutory requirements. This policy is published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum is not implemented in the way that leaders intend. This prevents some pupils from learning all that they could. Leaders should make sure that teachers implement the content of the curriculum in the intended order. This will help pupils to consolidate their learning and to remember more of the curriculum.
- In some areas of the curriculum, teachers are developing their subject knowledge. In these subjects, pupils are not learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff get the training and support that they need to develop their subject knowledge and implement the curriculum effectively. This will help to deepen pupils' understanding.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 144856 |
| DfE registration number | 344/6010 |
| Local authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 10243496 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 12 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 19 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Progress Schools Ltd |
| Chair | Charlotte Barton |
| Headteacher | Elaine Delahunt |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £14,000 to £32,500 |
| Telephone number | 0151 705 8033 |
| Website | www.progress-schools.co.uk |
| Email address | info@progress-schools.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 to 12 July 2018 |

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was 10 to 12 July 2018.
- The school provides a short-term placement for pupils who are disengaged from education, have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from education.
- 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 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, the director of education and the learning and development executive. The lead inspector held meetings with other leaders from Progress Schools Ltd, including those responsible for SEND, safeguarding, attendance and pupils' welfare. He also held a meeting with the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative from the local authority responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics, art, and personal, social, health and citizenship 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. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- 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. There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View, or free-text comments from parents, to consider. The lead inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents. They spoke to safeguarding leaders 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

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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