

Inspection of Liverpool Progressive School

Rice Lane, Walton, Merseyside L9 1NR

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

The quality of education

Behaviour and attitudes

Personal development

Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Requires improvement

Requires improvement

Requires improvement

Good

Requires improvement

Outstanding

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They are warmly greeted each morning by staff. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, quickly settle into school life. They enjoy spending social times together.

Pupils and students benefit from the high-quality care that they receive from staff. Pupils are encouraged to develop the skills and attributes that they need to be independent in life. Staff are well informed about pupils' particular interests and their likes and dislikes. Staff make effective use of these interests to engage pupils in their learning and to reduce their anxieties and worries.

Pupils and students feel safe in school. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day. Leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. In the main, the school is calm and orderly. However, a few pupils who struggle to access learning become disengaged in lessons and they do not behave as well as they should.

Staff deal swiftly and sensitively with any unkindness or name-calling, including any behaviour that could be viewed as bullying. However, despite these positives, a number of pupils have poor rates of attendance. This means that they miss out on opportunities to learn the curriculum with their peers.

Leaders do not have high enough expectations for the achievement of all pupils. Leaders do not ensure that some pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully understood by all staff. This is particularly true for pupils and students with the most complex needs. These pupils do not get all the support that they need, especially in early reading, to enable them to achieve well. Consequently, not all pupils achieve as highly as they should.

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

In some subjects, leaders have determined the important knowledge that pupils, and students in the sixth form, must be taught. They have also established when this essential knowledge should be learned. However, in many other subjects, leaders have not fully identified the curriculum knowledge that teachers must deliver to pupils. As a result, pupils and students do not build a secure body of subject knowledge across all subjects.

Added to the weaknesses in the curriculum design, some teaching staff do not choose the most appropriate activities to deliver new learning. This is particularly the case for pupils and students with the most complex SEND. Leaders and teachers do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively enough. They do not take sufficient account of these pupils' starting points, particularly in relation to their knowledge of communication and language. Consequently, pupils with complex additional needs do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders' assessment systems lack clarity. Consequently, some staff do not check how well pupils have understood and remembered the intended curriculum. This means that some pupils develop misconceptions in their learning. Furthermore, some teachers move on to new learning before pupils' knowledge of topics and concepts is secure.

The school's reading and phonics programme enables many pupils, and students in the sixth form, to learn to read fluently and accurately. However, some pupils with complex needs, who are at the early stages of learning to read, do not follow the same phonics programme. These pupils do not have regular lessons to help them to learn phonics. This hinders how well these pupils learn to read.

Leaders have not ensured that all teaching staff have the expertise that they need to identify and meet some pupils' additional SEND. On occasions, these pupils have unmet learning needs and they struggle to access the curriculum. This results in some pupils losing focus and becoming dysregulated. This is because they cannot access learning. This sometimes disrupts pupils' own learning, as well as that of others.

Leaders place a strong focus on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to manage their own personal care. They also learn to carry out routine daily activities, such as showering and preparing meals. These experiences enable them to become more independent. Pupils grow in confidence so that they can make their own decisions about what they want to eat or what they would like to do when they are older.

Pupils and students learn the importance of looking after their physical and mental health. Pupils benefit from the school's relationships and sex education and health education programmes. For example, pupils learn about developing healthy relationships. They know how to keep themselves safe.

Older pupils and students enjoy well-thought-out work-experience placements. These opportunities help pupils and students to decide what career pathway they may follow. Staff support pupils and students well to find destinations that match their interests and aspirations.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. For example, leaders ensure that pupils learn how to respect others who are different from themselves.

The proprietor body and leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have not ensured that pupils and students benefit from a high-quality education that meets their individual needs.

That said, the proprietor body has recognised the decline in the school's performance and has started to take effective action to improve the quality of education for pupils. Recently, the proprietor body has appointed school leaders with the knowledge and expertise to bring about improvement to the curriculum. Staff

feel well supported by these new leaders. Staff have confidence in their new leadership team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that an up-to-date policy for safeguarding is published on the school's website. A hard copy is also available to parents and carers on request from the school.

Leaders ensure that all staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe. Staff report and record concerns in a timely manner.

Leaders have clear oversight of emerging safeguarding concerns. They take swift action to provide vulnerable pupils with the timely help and support that they need. Leaders liaise well with external agencies when required.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, leaders have not determined the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. This hinders how well some pupils achieve. It also prevents teachers from checking how well pupils are learning new knowledge. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking. This is to enable pupils to learn well and to enable teachers to assess pupils' learning and development with accuracy.
- Some teachers do not make the most appropriate choices when designing learning activities, particularly for those pupils with complex learning needs. This prevents some pupils from learning well. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained to select the most suitable activities to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Some pupils and students with complex needs do not get sufficient support to develop their understanding of phonics. This limits how well these pupils begin to learn to read. Leaders should ensure that all pupils benefit from the school's early reading programme to improve how well they access the wider curriculum.
- Some pupils do not have their additional needs identified and met in a timely way. This prevents some teachers from adapting the delivery of the curriculum to meet these pupils' needs. Leaders should ensure that teaching staff have the knowledge and skills to identify SEND accurately.
- A number of pupils do not attend school regularly. This limits these pupils' learning. Leaders should take urgent action to improve the attendance of these pupils.

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

Unique reference number	133309
DfE registration number	341/6047
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10210340
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Claire Stretton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£81,588 to £108,615
Telephone number	0151 525 4004
Website	www.keys-group.co.uk
Email address	claire.stretton@keys-group.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 April 2018

Information about this school

- The school's most recent standard inspection was in April 2018.
- The school caters for pupils with a wide range of SEND. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' primary needs include: autism spectrum disorder; Down's syndrome; cognitive difficulties; physical difficulties; medical needs; and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There have been a number of changes in leadership since the previous inspection. There was an interim headteacher in post at the time of this inspection.
- The address of the school does not match the information registered on the government website, Get Information About Schools (GIAS). The school operates from Rice Lane, Walton, Merseyside L9 1NR. However, the school's address as recorded in GIAS is 'Rice Lane, Walton, Birmingham, West Midlands, Merseyside, L9 1NR'. The proprietor body has informed GIAS of the discrepancy.
- The name of the proprietor body as recorded on GIAS is Keys Group. The company Keys Group, as recorded on GIAS, does not match any companies registered with Companies House. The school's website states that the school is owned by Keys Group Ltd. Keys Group is the term commonly used by the proprietor body when referring to the company Keys Group Ltd.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

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 had 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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. They spoke with a group of representatives of the Keys Group, including the chair of the body of directors for education. An inspector also spoke with a representative of one of the local authorities that places a number of pupils at the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. This included: the school's central record of staff and visitors; staff training records; records of safeguarding; and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.

- An inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. They spoke with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- The lead inspector toured the school premises. Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and family members by telephone. There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tim Sherriff

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; and
 - (2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
 - 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;
 - 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(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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023

