

Progress Schools - Northamptonshire

8 Notre Dame Mews, Northampton NN1 2BG

Inspection date

14 March 2023

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(d)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not developed a curriculum that was well designed or sequenced. They had not identified the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary they wanted pupils to learn and when. They had not ensured that subject curriculums were appropriately planned. The curriculums did not take into account pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- At the previous inspection, leaders did not have high enough expectations of pupils. Pupils were experiencing a jumbled and disconnected series of lessons. Assessment of pupils' learning was inconsistent across the school. Leaders were not providing teachers with sufficient guidance related to the small steps that pupils needed to make to learn through the curriculum. Teachers were not showing a good understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs. Individual educational plans were not sharp enough. Pupils with SEND were not making as much progress as they could.
- Since the previous inspection, company officers have developed subject curriculum plans in a range of subjects. Some of these plans identify key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. However, many of these subject curriculums are incomplete. Leaders have not ensured that all subject curriculums clearly show how pupils should build their learning over time. Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is ambitious enough for all pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers consistently teach the curriculum in those subjects where there is planning, whether that planning is complete or not. Staff have low expectations of what pupils will learn and achieve. Staff do not make sure that learning is sequenced and builds on pupils' prior learning. Assessment is not used meaningfully across the school to help identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to plan future learning.
- Pupils' experiences in lessons contribute weakly to their learning. They do not have sufficient meaningful opportunities to learn and make progress. Pupils experience lessons that are chaotic and are disrupted by uncooperative and poor behaviour. They do

not gain knowledge, deepen their understanding or develop skills as well as they could.

- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils, including those with SEND. The curriculum is not adapted well to meet the needs of pupils who have education, health and care plans (EHC plan). Leaders have developed some individual educational plans, but these are incomplete, generalised and do not clearly relate to individual pupils' EHC plan objectives.
- Leaders have not prioritised reading. They have not developed a reading curriculum that supports pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Pupils are not fully supported to become fluent readers. Pupils have limited access to books, texts and other reading materials. Leaders have recently assessed pupils' reading abilities. Leaders have started to access some phonics resources to help pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Teaching to support pupils' reading is at a very early stage.
- As a result of these failings, pupils continue not to be prepared well enough for their next steps and future opportunities and experiences once they have left school.
- These previously unmet requirements of the independent school standards (the standards) in this part remain unmet.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(f)

- At the previous inspection, leaders were not following national guidance for relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. They had not consulted with parents and carers about the content of the school's RSE policy.
- Leaders now provide information about their RSE curriculum for the parents of new pupils to the school. They ensure that these parents understand the school's RSE policy. Leaders intend to consult with all parents when the RSE policy is reviewed and revised at the end of this academic year.
- These requirements of the standard are now met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(v)

- At the previous inspection, the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum was of poor quality. There were no opportunities for pupils to learn about faith or cultures that are different to their own.
- Leaders have developed the PSHE curriculum. However, leaders' own reflections indicate that this curriculum is not being delivered consistently and effectively to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils do not receive meaningful occasions to be positively involved in the local community and wider society. This limits their opportunity to learn about those who live near the school and further afield.
- These previously unmet requirements on the standard in this part remain unmet.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had secured an effective culture of safeguarding.

However, they were not consistently implementing the school's risk assessment policy. Off-site risk assessments did not contain sufficient details related to individual pupils' needs and associated risks. However, these failings related to the implementation of risk assessments were judged to not put pupils' safety and welfare at risk.

- Leaders have mostly maintained a secure culture of safeguarding since the previous inspection. They know pupils and their backgrounds well. They work with a range of external agencies when additional support is needed. Leaders take appropriate steps when they are concerned about pupils' welfare. All pre-employment checks are undertaken before adults start working with pupils.
- Leaders are not implementing the school's risk assessment policy effectively. The policy is weak and does not give clear guidance to those completing risk assessments. Leaders have not developed their practices for improving the quality of risk assessments since the previous inspection. Potential risks and control measures identified in risk assessments potentially leave pupils unsafe. Leaders have identified weaknesses in their risk assessments. Such weaknesses undermine the culture of safeguarding.
- These standards are unmet.

Paragraph 11

- At the previous inspection, leaders were not following their own health and safety policy. Leaders' checks were not sufficient to identify possible health and safety concerns.
- The proprietor has since improved practices in relation to health and safety. Leaders have reviewed their approach to how they meet their responsibilities. They have commissioned the services of an external agency to undertake regular health and safety checks. This agency is also contracted to complete remedial work when concerns are identified. For example, planned repairs to holes in walls and the water heating system were due to be undertaken shortly after the current inspection.
- Leaders maintain clear records of health and safety checks that show they fulfil their responsibilities well.
- The standard is now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy is on the school's website.
- This requirement of the standard remains met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34, 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the standards to ensure that the school consistently met all of them.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has not ensured that the standards are met securely and consistently.
- Leaders have not developed an ambitious curriculum. They have not ensured that the curriculum is effectively implemented. They have not ensured that staff are suitably trained to understand and provide for the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils are not

learning as well as they could. Pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders do not ensure that pupils understand the need to respect different faiths and cultures.
- Leaders are not actively promoting the welfare and well-being of pupils. The standard relating to safeguarding, judged as met at the previous inspection, is now judged as being unmet. This is due to failings in relation to risk assessment that potentially put pupils' welfare at risk.
- New leaders, using the company's quality assurance processes, are aware of the school's many weaknesses.
- The action plan submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) following the previous inspection, despite being appropriate, has not been implemented. Leaders have not brought about sustained improvements in the school's provision.
- This standard remains unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135754
DfE registration number	941/6070
Inspection number	10278502

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Matthew McCann
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,500 to £32,000
Telephone number	0160 4970320
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	northampton@progress-schools.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 July 2022

Information about this school

- The school's most recent standard inspection was in July 2022 and the school received an overall judgement of inadequate.
- New senior leaders and company officers have been appointed since the previous standard inspection. The headteacher started at the school in January 2023. The head of school took up his position in the autumn term of 2022. The deputy headteacher has recently started at the school. There have been many other changes in staff since the previous inspection.
- 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. There are currently 25 pupils on roll.
- Since the previous inspection, the school is using additional accommodation at the same site.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection since the previous standard inspection. In line with the commission, the inspection took place without notice.
- The DfE required the school to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated this plan on 1 February 2023 and deemed it to be acceptable.
- The DfE accepted the school's action plan on 9 February 2023.
- The inspector met with the head of school, safeguarding leaders and the chair of the proprietor body, who is also the managing director. The inspector met company officers remotely.
- The inspector visited lessons and spoke with pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents and policies, including those related to curriculum and safeguarding. He reviewed the single central record, the school's health and safety records and samples of risk assessments.

Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

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 subparagraph (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.
- 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

- 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.

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2A(1) the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(f) consults with parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).

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.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

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