

Progress Schools – Lilford Centre

The Lilford Centre, Lancaster Avenue, Tyldesley, Wigan M29 8LN

Inspection date

19 April 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

Paragraph 2, 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i)

- At the previous standard inspection, in July 2022, inspectors found that pupils did not access a broad curriculum. The curriculum did not capture pupils' interests. Moreover, it did not prepare them well enough for their next stages of education, training or employment. Inspectors found that the curriculum did not meet the needs of pupils. Leaders did not ensure that teachers addressed gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in reading.
- Leaders' action plans following the standard inspection set out how they intended to broaden and adapt the curriculum that pupils experienced to better meet their needs. However, leaders failed to identify the key tasks in relation to the curriculum that were needed to bring about the required improvements. Furthermore, the timescales that they set for curriculum improvements were unrealistic.
- During this inspection, it was evident that leaders have not demonstrated the urgency required to address the significant weaknesses identified in the previous standard inspection. While leaders ensure that pupils study a broader range of subjects, the curriculum is underdeveloped and ineffective. Lessons are not well planned and resources are not appropriately used to aid pupils' learning. Teachers do not have the required subject expertise. Leaders do not ensure that pupils benefit from effective support during lessons or from a suitably ambitious curriculum. Pupils do not achieve well. There is a lack of support for pupils to develop their reading knowledge.
- At the previous standard inspection, in July 2022, it was also identified that leaders did not ensure that pupils benefited from well-structured careers information, advice and guidance. At the time of the standard inspection, pupils did not receive impartial careers advice.
- In their action plan, leaders set out clear intentions to restructure careers education at the school and commission an independent careers adviser. These actions were appropriate with suitable timescales.

- Leaders have taken urgent action, as outlined in their action plan, to resolve the failings in this paragraph, which were identified at the previous standard inspection. All pupils now regularly access careers lessons. They benefit from the support of an independent careers adviser. Older pupils have made effective use of this support to help them to apply for places at local colleges for the next academic year.
- The independent school standards (the standards) in this part remain unmet.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Inspectors identified serious shortcomings in the procedures for keeping pupils safe during the previous standard inspection in July 2022. Inspectors raised concerns about how effectively leaders checked on the welfare of pupils who were not attending school on a regular basis.
- Leaders made clear in their action plans their commitment to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders were explicit in how they intended to bring about rapid and much-needed improvements to their procedures.
- Leaders have taken the decisive action that they planned in relation to pupils' welfare. They have made sure that robust systems are in place to keep pupils safe. Most pupils at the school now attend full time. Leaders have much higher expectations for pupils' attendance. Leaders ensure that rigorous procedures are adhered to. They make sure that any unexpected absences are explored and challenged. Leaders are diligent in carrying out checks to ensure that when alternative provision is used, it is safe and suitable for pupils.
- The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents and carers. It is implemented well.
- The standards in this part are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Inspectors noted that weaknesses in leadership and management underpinned many of the issues identified during the previous standard inspection in July 2022. Leaders' lack of oversight in relation to safeguarding meant that some pupils were not sufficiently protected from the potential risk of harm. Leaders did not provide the quality of leadership required to improve the curriculum to ensure that it met pupils' learning needs.
- In their action plan, leaders identified some actions to address these shortcomings. However, they failed to set realistic timescales to bring about the necessary improvements to the quality of education that pupils receive. They did not think through sufficiently well what needs to be done or who should carry out key tasks. The many changes to staffing, including at senior leadership level, have meant that most of the planned activities have not been completed.
- During this inspection, the inspector found that leaders have created schemes of work for pupils for the broader curriculum now on offer. However, these schemes have not been implemented. Moreover, in many subjects, the intended learning does not capture

pupils' interests. Leaders do not ensure that pupils build up their knowledge over time. The curriculum remains ineffective.

- The standards in this part remain unmet.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders ensure that this requirement is met. They ensure that each pupil can access all aspects of school life. Adaptations are made, where needed, to enable this to happen. For example, leaders ensure that key learning, such as personal, social, health and economic education, is timetabled when pupils who also attend other provision are on site.

School details

Unique reference number	148070
DfE registration number	359/6005
Inspection number	10278287

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Progress Schools limited
Chair	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Matthew McCann
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,870
Telephone number	01942 929965
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	info@progress-schools.co.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 July 2022

Information about this school

- The school's first standard inspection took place in July 2022.
- The school operates from premises at The Lilford Centre, Lancaster Avenue, Tyldesley, Wigan M29 8LN.
- There have been a number of changes to leadership arrangements since the previous inspection. A new interim headteacher took up post the week that this inspection took place. A new regional headteacher was appointed in January 2023.

- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Many pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have experienced periods of disrupted learning prior to attending this school.
- The school is also used for short-term provision for pupils who have been suspended from other schools. However, there were no pupils accessing this short-term provision at the time of the inspection.
- There were no primary-age pupils on roll at the time of the inspection.
- Leaders make use of two unregistered providers for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The inspection was carried out without notice. 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.
- The inspector considered any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the interim headteacher, the regional headteacher and other leaders in the school. She also spoke with the managing director and other leaders from the proprietor body.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. This included the school's central record of staff, staff training records, records of safeguarding and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- The inspector spoke with the leaders about the curriculum. She looked at curriculum plans and pupils' timetables. The inspector also visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with staff and talked with pupils.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at social times. She observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, 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 sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 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.

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 school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner.

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.

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