

# Progress Schools – Thrapston

Cedar Drive, Thrapston, Northampton NN14 4LZ

**Inspection date**

20 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

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

- At the previous inspection, leaders had developed a new curriculum with the aim of providing pupils with different pathways. Each pathway had been designed to enable pupils to gain a range of qualifications in different subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Subject curriculums were planned to build learning over time. However, leaders had not ensured that the planned curriculum was implemented effectively.
- Leaders had not ensured that pupils' educational needs were being met. Leaders had not given teachers clear guidance as to how to support pupils with SEND. Leaders had not created individual education plans for each pupil.
- Leaders had begun to prioritise reading by encouraging pupils to read. However, they did not have in place effective means of determining the reading support that pupils needed or of checking pupils' progress in learning to read. Leaders had not established how they would support pupils who are at an early stage of reading.
- Pupils did not have meaningful opportunities to learn. Their experiences in lessons contributed weakly to their learning. They did not gain knowledge or deepen their understanding. Some pupils were not able to recall their learning. As a result, they did not develop skills as well as they could.
- Leaders have made very little progress in implementing the new 'pathway' curriculum. They have recently focused on ensuring that they have accurate English and mathematics assessments that detail pupils' knowledge gaps in these subjects. However, these assessments are not complete, so leaders are unable to ensure that pupils are accessing a suitable curriculum pathway. Teachers do not have the information they need to take into account pupils' prior attainment when planning lessons.
- Leaders have ensured that staff have access to appropriate planning and resources for the mathematics curriculum. However, due to staff turnover and lack of strategic

leadership, leaders have not ensured that the planned curriculum is implemented effectively in all subjects.

- Leaders have very recently introduced a secure way of assessing pupils' ability in reading. Once the assessments are complete, those pupils who struggle to read confidently have access to a range of support and age-appropriate books. However, only a few pupils have undertaken the assessments. Staff have not yet received the training they need to deliver the programme. As a result, not all pupils who require it are receiving support to help them become confident readers.
- Leaders have recently reviewed and updated pupils' one-page profiles to identify clearly the needs of pupils who have education, health and care (EHC) plans. The number of pupils with individual education development plans has increased. However, it is too soon to see if these improvements have had any effect in helping staff meet these pupils' needs.
- Previously, pupils have experienced a disrupted learning environment. There have also been several changes in teaching staff. As a result, pupils have not deepened their knowledge and developed skills as well as they could over time. However, there are signs that this situation is starting to improve. Leaders have focused on establishing a calm environment that enables pupils to learn. Furthermore, pupils are now able to talk about what they have been learning in lessons and how it connects to previous learning. There is evidence of well-planned mathematics lessons.
- A significant number of pupils do not attend the school and access any of the school's curriculum. Leaders are aware that pupils who do not attend school are making little progress in their learning.
- Leaders have not yet introduced effective ways to check whether the curriculum is being delivered effectively. They do not have effective ways to check what pupils are learning.
- These requirements remain unmet.

#### *Paragraph 3, 3(c)*

- At the previous inspection, teachers did not employ effective teaching methods and activities. The delivery of lessons was not coherent and class time was not well managed.
- Lessons are now structured to make the most of the learning time. Pupils engage with the assessment tasks. Staff provide appropriate support to enable pupils to complete their work.
- The requirement is now met.
- The school does not meet all the previously unmet requirements of the independent school standards (the standards) in this part.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)*

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the school's safeguarding policy was implemented consistently. Some of the school's safeguarding records lacked the necessary accuracy to record safeguarding concerns. Leaders had not passed on

safeguarding-related information to all appropriate external agencies when they had such information to share. This meant that pupils were potentially unsafe.

- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is implemented consistently. The school's safeguarding records, for example, are accurate. They contain detail about how leaders work with external agencies and share safeguarding information.
- Staff have a good understanding of the school's safeguarding policy and have received detailed safeguarding training and updates. Staff have regular meetings about vulnerable pupils to ensure that all safeguarding needs are well known. Pupils say that they feel much safer at school.
- Leaders ensure that there are daily telephone calls made to check on the welfare of any pupil who is absent. Leaders contact the local authority regularly to review those pupils who are persistently absent or on a part-time timetable.
- This standard is now met.

#### *Paragraph 9, 9(b)*

- At the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour was poor. Exclusions were high. Staff did not implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. Leaders did not undertake clear analysis of behaviour over time. The approaches leaders were taking did not lead to sustained improvements in pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' overall attendance was poor. Some pupils did not attend at all. Leaders had not been effective in improving attendance.
- Exclusions remain high. A significant number of pupils are on a reduced timetable because of their poor behaviour. Pupils' overall attendance remains poor.
- However, the small number of pupils that attend the school are well behaved. Staff follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. Staff and pupils say that the number of incidents of poor behaviour has decreased recently. Pupils say that leaders' actions have led to a much calmer learning environment.
- This standard is now met.

#### *Paragraph 15*

- At the previous monitoring inspection, this standard was unmet because leaders had failed to maintain attendance registers accurately. Some pupils' absence had been recorded as authorised when this was not necessarily the case.
- Leaders have ensured that the correct register codes are used for absences. Attendance registers are now maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- This standard is now met.

#### *Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- At the previous inspection, the school's risk assessment policy was not fit for purpose. It did not give clear guidance to staff regarding the completion of risk assessments. Leaders had not implemented the risk assessment policy effectively as many pupils did not have risk assessments. The risk assessments that were in place for some pupils varied in quality and were not regularly updated. Staff did not have the necessary

information to be able to support pupils in managing and reducing possible risky behaviours.

- Leaders have further reviewed their approach to risk assessment. The school's risk assessment policy contains detail about how to complete risk assessments. However, leaders have not ensured that the policy gives clear guidance to staff about how individual pupil risk assessments should be reviewed and updated.
- Leaders do not implement the risk assessment policy effectively. The policy states that each pupil should have an individual risk assessment completed on their entry to the school. Many pupils do not have such a risk assessment.
- Those risk assessments that are in place vary in quality. Very few are updated regularly or after a significant incident, including occasions of violent behaviour towards staff. Leaders have not updated risk assessments when pupils' provision changes, such as when attending a new alternative provision. Leaders have not ensured that staff have the necessary information to be able to support pupils, including in managing and reducing possible risky behaviours.
- This standard remains unmet.
- The school does not meet all the previously unmet requirements of the standards in this part.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

##### *Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

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

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the previous inspection, the leadership structure was found to be in a state of flux. There had been significant change in the leadership of the school and some new appointees were yet to start working at the school. Leaders were aware of some of the significant weaknesses in the provision of education to all pupils. However, there was little capacity for sustained improvement. There was not an effective school development plan in place. The proprietor and leaders did not demonstrate good knowledge and skills to ensure that the standards were consistently met. The proprietor continued to not meet their legal duty to keep pupils safe.
- The proprietor has appointed new school leaders. Many of these leaders have just started in their role. They recognise there is still much to do to improve the school. However, there is now more capacity for sustained improvement. Staff say that some of the recent changes leaders have introduced have had a positive impact.
- Leaders know that the school has lacked a clear and coherent vision. They have just started to develop a school improvement plan. Leaders know that they are only just starting to provide effective educational provision for some pupils.

- The proprietor and leaders have not demonstrated good knowledge and skills to ensure that the standards are consistently met. Previously unmet standards continue to be unmet.
- The school does not meet all the previously unmet requirements of the standards in this part.

## **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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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	147697
DfE registration number	940/6011
Inspection number	10283895

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	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Progress Schools limited
Chair	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Matthew McCann
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,500 to £32,500
Telephone number	01832 777089
Website	<a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:thrapstonPS@progress-schools.co.uk">thrapstonPS@progress-schools.co.uk</a>
Dates of previous standard inspection	15 to 17 March 2022

## Information about this school

- Progress Schools – Thrapston is registered to provide full-time education for up to 60 pupils aged 11 to 16 years. There are currently 27 pupils on roll.
- The school offers education to pupils with behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs. Many of these pupils have been excluded from their previous provision.
- The school uses the services of four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 15 to 17 March 2022 and the school received an overall judgement of inadequate.

- A progress monitoring inspection of the school took place on 12 October 2022.
- Since the previous monitoring inspection, the new leaders that were appointed have taken up their posts, including the director of schools and education and the head of school.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education (DfE), 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.
- Following the most recent progress monitoring inspection in October 2022, the DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. Ofsted evaluated the plan on 1 February 2023. The DfE rejected the action plan.
- The inspection was carried out without notice, in line with the commission from the DfE. The inspection was the school's second monitoring inspection.
- The inspector met with the head of school and the director for quality. The inspector spoke with company officers, including the safeguarding leader and special educational needs coordinator. The inspector spoke to the chair of the proprietorial body.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met some pupils to talk about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents relating to the school's provision, including: the school action plan: safeguarding records: attendance records: and pupils' risk assessments.
- The inspector checked a sample of pupils' EHC plans and individual education development plans.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record and recruitment procedures.

## Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, 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
  - 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)(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(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 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.

## **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;

### **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.
- ☑ 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
  - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- ☑ 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

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