

Progress Schools - Toxteth

115 Upper Warwick Street, Liverpool L8 8HD

Inspection date

4 July 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(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(i)

- At the time of the school's standard inspection in October 2022, this independent school standard ('the standard') was unmet. Inspectors found that leaders had not ensured that the curriculum took account of pupils' prior learning, needs or interests. The curriculum did not set out the important knowledge that pupils needed to be ready for the next stage in their education, employment or training. Inspectors found that leaders had not made appropriate arrangements to ensure that pupils learned to read accurately and fluently. Leaders had not ensured that pupils were fully prepared for life in British society.
- In their action plan, leaders proposed a number of actions, including revising the school's curriculum policy; introducing new quality assurance procedures; and carrying out baseline assessments.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable curriculum policy in place. This is supported by plans and schemes of work that leaders are in the process of redesigning. Nevertheless, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. They are in the process of revising these plans to ensure that they match the ambition of the national curriculum. They are also organising these new plans by year group across key stage 3 and key stage 4. This means that pupils can increasingly build on what they have learned in their previous schools and be more fully prepared for their next steps.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g)

- This standard was unmet at the last inspection in October 2022. Inspectors found that teachers had not been provided with appropriate training to support them to teach pupils to read well. Leaders did not ensure that teachers checked regularly for any gaps in pupils' learning, or that pupils could remember earlier learning. Leaders had not ensured that staff had the expertise to make appropriate adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In their action plan, leaders proposed a number of actions, including setting up subject working groups for staff.

- Leaders have taken some actions to resolve the weaknesses identified at the standard inspection. For example, they have carefully considered how they will improve the effectiveness of teaching at the school. They have supported teachers in delivering face-to-face lessons. Leaders expect teachers to follow their curriculum plans and schemes of work. Nonetheless, many lessons are taught by teachers who are not subject specialists. These staff do not feel well equipped to teach the knowledge set out in the subject plans. To remedy this, leaders have devised a programme of subject-specific training and support for teachers that will start in the summer of 2023.
- Leaders carry out a range of assessments when pupils join the school to establish their starting points. Leaders ensure that teachers are given this assessment information, as well as information about pupils' additional needs. Leaders have provided support for teachers to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nonetheless, those pupils who are struggling readers do not get the help and support that they need to learn to read with accuracy and fluency. This hinders how well these pupils are able to access the wider curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that teachers frequently check how well pupils have learned and remembered important knowledge from previous lessons. They encourage teachers to address any gaps that pupils may have before they introduce new concepts.
- The school does not meet all the previously unmet requirements in this part.

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

Paragraph 5, 5(b), 5(b)(v)

- At the school's standard inspection in October 2022, this standard was found to be unmet. Inspectors found that leaders had not ensured that pupils had gained sufficient understanding of the faiths, cultures and communities that make up modern Britain.
- In their action plan, leaders proposed to align their personal, social and health education curriculum with a specified commercial scheme.
- Leaders have taken decisive actions to ensure that pupils now learn about different faiths, cultures and communities. They have ensured that this is now taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Leaders have arranged trips and visits for pupils such as to the local Anglican cathedral. Pupils enjoy helping out in the community shop and have taken part in local social action projects.
- The school meets all the previously unmet requirements in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (in relation to the proprietor body's checks on the suitability of staff)

Part 6. Provision of information (in relation to the publication of the school's safeguarding policy)

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 18(1)–18(3), 19(1)–19(3), 21(1)–21(5), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- This standard was unmet at the school's last standard inspection in October 2022. Inspectors found that leaders did not take appropriate or timely action to reduce the safeguarding risks that pupils may have faced. They did not check that the pupils who were absent or on part-time timetables were safe.

- In their action plan, leaders proposed to install new software for reporting, recording and monitoring safeguarding concerns. They intended that senior leaders would discuss vulnerable pupils on a weekly basis. Leaders asserted that they had already introduced extra meetings with commissioners to discuss pupils' attendance.
- Leaders have taken urgent and effective action to address the weaknesses found at the standard inspection. Leaders have ensured that all staff have had appropriate training so that they understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Staff follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures as intended. They report and record concerns in a timely manner. Leaders meet weekly to monitor and review safeguarding concerns and any agreed actions.
- Pupils' absence both from the school and the alternative provision is followed up as a matter of urgency. Staff carry out home visits as required to check that pupils are safe and well.
- Leaders work closely with new pupils, their parents and carers and their previous school. They ensure that they establish any potential risks to the new pupil. They put suitable arrangements in place to reduce these identified risks.
- Leaders carry out all of the required checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. These are carried out prior to staff taking up their posts. All new staff undertake a comprehensive induction programme that includes safeguarding training.
- Leaders have published the school's safeguarding policy on the website. This policy complies with current statutory guidance.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- This standard was found to be unmet at the school's standard inspection in October 2022. Inspectors found that leaders had failed to carry out risk assessments to safeguard those pupils placed in alternative provisions. Leaders did not share important information with alternative providers so that these providers could keep pupils safe.
- Although leaders proposed some actions in their plan, none of these actions addressed the specific issues identified in the standard inspection.
- Leaders have a suitable risk assessment policy in place. They have carried out risk assessments for the school's premises, activities and individual pupils. They have identified and implemented appropriate control measures.
- Leaders now carry out thorough checks on alternative providers prior to placing pupils in these provisions. They ensure that there are robust risk assessments in place for any pupils who attend alternative provision. This information is shared with providers. Leaders carry out frequent checks to reassure themselves of the continued suitability of provisions. They make daily calls to providers to follow up on pupils' attendance.
- The school meets all the previously unmet requirements in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the school's last standard inspection in October 2022, this standard was unmet. Inspectors found that the proprietor body had failed to ensure that all the standards were met and it had not carried out its statutory obligations, including in relation to keeping pupils safe. The proprietor body had not held leaders to account for the poor-

quality education that pupils received. Inspectors found that the proprietor body did not have the capacity to improve the school.

- Leaders neglected to propose actions that would address all of the specific issues identified at the standard inspection. Some of leaders' proposed actions did not match the failings identified at the inspection.
- The proprietor body has ensured that leaders have made progress in resolving the weaknesses identified at the standard inspection. They have held leaders to account for their actions and their impact in addressing the unmet standards.
- Leaders have ensured that some previously unmet standards, such as those around the school's safeguarding arrangements and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are now met. Nevertheless, there remain some unmet standards for the quality of education. Leaders have made progress in resolving some of these weaknesses. However, leaders have not completed all of their planned actions to improve the curriculum and the effectiveness of teaching.
- The school does not meet all the previously unmet requirements 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. 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

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| Unique reference number | 143912 |
| DfE registration number | 341/6008 |
| Inspection number | 10290766 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 13 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 6 |
| Proprietor | Progress Schools Limited |
| Chair | Charlotte Barton |
| Headteacher | Gina Lunt |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £11,000 to £31,500 |
| Telephone number | 0151 559 1867 |
| Website | www.progress-schools.co.uk |
| Email address | liverpool@progress-schools.co.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 4 to 6 October 2022 |

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 4 to 6 October 2022.
- The school operates from premises at 115 Upper Warwick Street, Liverpool, L8 8HD.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proprietor body provides a breakfast club for pupils.

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 is the school's first progress monitoring inspection following the standard inspection in October 2022.
- The Department of Education required the school to prepare an action plan. This plan was rejected.
- This inspection was carried out without notice.
- The inspector met with the headteacher. She also spoke by telephone with the chair of the governing body. The inspector met with representatives of the proprietor body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers and looked at some examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation. This included information relating to the standards, the school's curriculum, leaders' improvement priorities, leaders' approach to safeguarding pupils and the checks that leaders carry out on newly appointed staff, including supply staff. The inspector also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their learning and experiences at school.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, 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 unmet at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 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
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

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(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.
 - 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(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(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
- 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 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(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

■ 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.

■ 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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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