

Progress Schools - Lilford Centre

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

Inspection dates

6 December 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(1), 2(1)(a)

- When the school received its standard inspection in July 2022, inspectors found this independent school standard ('the standards') to be unmet. Inspectors found that the school had failed to draw up and implement a curriculum policy, and schemes of work, that provided pupils with a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils did not receive sufficient experiences to develop aesthetic and creative knowledge. The curriculum did not adequately address the needs of pupils, who had weaknesses in their reading knowledge. The curriculum and associated schemes of work were found to lack clarity about the knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. This impeded staff's ability to implement the curriculum effectively.
- Following the standard inspection, the school submitted an action plan in December 2022. The plan was rejected by the Department for Education (DfE) because it did not provide sufficient assurance that the proprietor body would resolve the issues identified at the standard inspection.
- When the school received a progress monitoring inspection in April 2023, inspectors found that the proprietor body had not acted quickly enough to address the weaknesses in the curriculum that were identified at the standard inspection. Although pupils now studied a broader range of subjects, the curriculum in these subjects was found to be underdeveloped and ineffective. Furthermore, pupils still lacked the support that they needed to improve their reading knowledge.
- A further action plan, which was submitted in July 2023, was also rejected by the DfE.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, the inspector found that curriculum development remains incomplete in a number of subjects. For example, in some subjects, schemes of work are not fully developed. Leaders have not successfully clarified all of the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Insufficient consideration has been given to the order in which pupils will learn, revisit and consolidate knowledge. This is likely to

impede pupils' ability to build firmly upon prior learning, and to know more and remember more over time in different subjects.

- The school has made some improvements to the reading curriculum. For example, there are opportunities for pupils to learn important new vocabulary and to develop their comprehension skills. The school has set out its intention that pupils should read with fluency. However, the curriculum still fails to address the needs of pupils who struggle with reading because they have missing phonics knowledge. This is likely to make it difficult for these pupils to read with confidence, and with the fluency, that leaders intend.

Paragraph 3, 3(a) – 3(f)

- At the school's standard inspection in July 2022 and the subsequent progress monitoring inspection in April 2023, inspectors judged this standard to be unmet. Teachers lacked the strong knowledge that they needed to teach some subjects effectively. The choice of lesson content was poor and undemanding. The school had not ensured that staff had the expertise needed to recognise or address the serious gaps in some pupils' reading knowledge.
- Inspectors found that a considerable proportion of pupils worked at home for part of the week, without guidance or support to help them to learn. Consequently, pupils were prevented from increasing their understanding and developing their skills in the subjects taught.
- The proprietor body's action plan, submitted in December 2022, was judged to be unacceptable. This was because it failed to provide assurance that it would lead to the relevant standards being met. For example, the proprietor body failed to propose appropriate actions to address the weaknesses in staff's subject knowledge.
- Following the progress monitoring inspection in April 2023, a subsequent action plan, submitted to the DfE in July 2023, was also rejected.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, the inspector found that despite the time that has elapsed since the school's last standard inspection, too little progress has been made to address this unmet standard. The school has failed to ensure that the curriculum provides staff with enough information about the most appropriate ways to teach lessons. Pupils whose attendance is poor receive little or no support to ensure that they learn the curriculum while at home. Pupils at the early stage of reading do not receive the support that they need to ensure their progress through the reading curriculum.
- The standards in this part remain unmet.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)

- The proprietor body has ensured that there is a suitable safeguarding policy in place and that this is published on the school's website. This policy has regard to the appropriate statutory guidance.
- There are secure procedures in place for staff to report any concerns that they might have about a pupil's welfare. The school communicates with other professionals, such as the local authority, to ensure that pupils are safe and well when not in school.

- Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. This helps staff to recognise when pupils may be at risk from harm. The proprietor body demonstrates the diligence required when checking references for newly appointed staff.
- These standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the school's standard inspection in July 2022, the standard in this part was unmet. The proprietor and leaders did not demonstrate the knowledge and skills to ensure that all of the standards were consistently met. Insufficient progress had been made to meet the standards by the time that the progress monitoring inspection took place in April 2023. Both of the action plans that the school submitted to the DfE were judged to be unacceptable.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, evidence showed that despite a further curriculum review, and some improvements to the reading curriculum, leaders had not taken sufficient action to ensure that the school met all of the standards that were found to be unmet in July 2022. The quality of education remained poor.
- The standard in this part is not met.

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	148070
DfE registration number	359/6005
Inspection number	10306088

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 day school
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Andrew Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,870
Telephone number	0151 559 1867
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	lilfordps@progress-schools.co.uk
Date 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.
- A new head of school was appointed in September 2023. There is no longer a regional headteacher.
- 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.

- Leaders make use of two unregistered alternative providers.

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 standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The previous standard inspection was 12 to 14 July 2022. At this inspection, the school was judged not to comply with the standards.
- The DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. This plan was statutory. Ofsted evaluated the plan on 20 December 2022. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- Following the standard inspection in July 2022, the school's first progress monitoring inspection was carried out in April 2023.
- A second action plan was evaluated by Ofsted on 24 July 2023. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- As part of this monitoring inspection, the DfE required the inspector to check part 3, paragraph 7 and part 6, paragraph 32.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector considered any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the head of school. She spoke on the telephone with leaders from the proprietor body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with the leaders about the curriculum. She looked at curriculum plans and pupils' timetables. The inspector visited a sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work. The inspector spoke to staff and talked with a small number of pupils about their work and about wider school life.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, 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.
- 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.

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