

Inspection of Progress Schools - Lilford Centre

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

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils respond well to the calm environment that exists at the school. They value the positive relationships that they have with staff. Most pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their behaviour and conduct. Pupils are happy.

Many pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education prior to joining the school. Pupils benefit from staff's care and consideration for their well-being. This helps most pupils to make a settled start to their time at the school.

All of the pupils at this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Although the school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the proprietor has not ensured that they benefit sufficiently well from the school's curriculum.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences that nurture their talents and interests. For example, fundraising for charity, fishing and cooking. The school ensures that these experiences help to improve pupils' teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills. Pupils become confident, resilient and independent young people.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The proprietor has provided the necessary support to the school to address the issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. This has helped to accelerate improvements to the school's curriculum. It has ensured that the school meets the independent school standards (the 'standards') in relation to the quality of education and leadership and management that were previously unmet.

The proprietor has helped the school to establish an ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. The key information that pupils should learn is set out clearly. Pupils are beginning to respond well to the increased demands of the curriculum but they have not yet had time to fully benefit. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

At the end of key stage 4, pupils access a narrow suite of qualifications. This means that some pupils do not build up a portfolio of achievements that match the full breadth of their interests or aspirations. Even so, most pupils are well supported to move on to meaningful destinations including, further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Staff make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. However, the school's assessment strategies are at an early stage of development. Staff do not promptly identify and address the gaps and misconceptions that some pupils have in their learning. When this happens, pupils move on to new learning before they are

ready. This means that they are not as well prepared as they should be for each stage of their education.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. It has a detailed understanding of the specific needs of each pupil. In most subjects, teachers design activities that help these pupils to learn the curriculum. However, in the subjects where the curriculum is relatively new, the activities that teachers design do not help some pupils to develop their knowledge in sufficient depth. This is because staff have not received the training that they need to ensure that they deliver the curriculum well.

The school has clear systems in place to identify pupils who may need support with their reading. Staff have received the training that they need to help pupils to catch up with their phonics knowledge. The texts that pupils read help to capture their interest in reading and they receive the help that they need to develop their comprehension skills. The school provides pupils with access to a wide range of books that help to build their understanding of the wider world. For example, pupils read books about mental health, how to manage change in your life and appreciating the differences that exist between people.

In the main, pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They engage purposefully with staff about the work that they are given. The school provides intelligent support to those pupils who need help to manage their own behaviour. Most pupils have a history of poor attendance prior to joining this school. Staff work closely with parents and carers and external agencies to support these pupils to improve their attendance over time.

The school provides pupils with a broad range of experiences that supports their wider development. For example, they learn about democracy, suffragettes and global political issues. Pupils know how to care for their mental and physical health. They learn about how to keep themselves safe in the community. Pupils benefit from a programme of careers education. This includes independent careers advice.

Staff have access to detailed plans for each of the subjects that they teach. This has a positive impact on their workload and well-being. They value the subject-curriculum training that they have received. They have the confidence and knowledge to deliver the curriculums in these subjects well.

Although the proprietor and the school have not fully realised their ambitions for the quality of education at the school, they are clear about what needs to be done. They work well together to set the strategic direction of the school and they are beginning to hold leaders at all levels to account more effectively for the quality of education that pupils receive. The proprietor ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The recent improvements to the school's curriculum show that the proprietor has the capacity to address the areas for improvement identified in this inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- On occasion, the school is not quick enough to identify and rectify the gaps and misconceptions in some pupils' knowledge. This means that these pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that staff develop a strong understanding of its assessment strategy so that they can help pupils to build their knowledge securely over time.
- At times, staff design activities that do not help pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge in the subjects that they study. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they should. The school should provide staff with the training that they need to design activities that are well matched to pupils' needs so that they are well prepared for each stage of their education.
- The range of qualifications available to pupils is limited. Some pupils do not benefit from gaining a portfolio of certificates and awards. As a result, these pupils are not as ready as they should be for the next phase of their education. The school should ensure that pupils have access to a broad range of opportunities to gain recognition for their achievements so that they can better fulfil their aspirations.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	148070
DfE registration number	359/6005
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10322516
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	Charlotte Charnley (also known as Charlotte Barton)
Headteacher	Andrew Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000 to £38,000
Telephone number	01942929965
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	lilfordps@progress-schools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 to 14 July 2022

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was 12 to 14 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.
- The school caters for pupils with SEND. 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. This includes lengthy periods of absence.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is registered to admit up to 50 pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no pupils in key stage 2 or key stage 3.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- The previous standard inspection of this school was 12 to 14 July 2022. At this inspection, the school was judged not to comply with the standards.
- The Department for Education (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. This plan was statutory. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- As part of the monitoring inspection which took place on 6 December 2023, the DfE required the inspector to check part 3, paragraph 7 and part 6, paragraph 32. At this inspection, the school was judged not to comply with the standards.
- A third action plan was evaluated by Ofsted on 10 April 2024. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- As part of this standard inspection, the registration authority for independent schools asked Ofsted to carry out a progress monitoring inspection. The purpose of this was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its

previous inspection. Specifically, the DfE required the inspectors to check part 1, paragraphs 2 and 3, and part 8, paragraph 1.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors considered any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English including reading, science and personal, social and health education. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum across other subject areas. They looked at curriculum documentation and viewed samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors spoke with the headteacher. They spoke with members of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the school's provision for pupils with SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector spoke with the service lead for SEND at the local authority that is responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school and reviewed documentation to check the school's compliance with the standards.

The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards

During the inspection we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous progress monitoring inspection on 6 December 2023.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: the school now meets the previously failed standards.

The school now meets the following standards

PART 1: Quality of education provided

1. The standards about the quality of education provided at the school are those contained in this Part.

- 2. (1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - (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.
- 3. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
 - (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;
 - (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;
 - (c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - (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;
 - (e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught; and
 - (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—
 - (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gil Bourgade

Ofsted Inspector

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