

# Inspection of Progress Schools - Gorton

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Hideout Youth Zone, 1 Queens Avenue, Manchester M12 5PX

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school welcomes many pupils who have not benefited from a positive educational experience in the past. The school is an accepting and friendly place where staff help pupils to overcome the difficulties that they have faced before joining the school. Pupils know that staff care about them and want them to do well. This helps pupils to feel happy, settled and safe.

The school has raised its expectations for pupils' academic success, and it has set about improving the quality of the curriculum. However, some pupils do not learn as well as they should in some subjects. This is because in some subjects, curriculums are in the earlier stages of development and in others, pupils have gaps in knowledge that remain unaddressed.

Pupils are encouraged to try hard. Staff use motivational language to get the best from pupils. Pupils learn to respect each other and the adults who help them. They are supported to develop the behaviours and attributes that they need to be successful in their future lives.

The school offers a thoughtful choice of wider experiences and enrichment activities. For example, snowboarding trips, rock climbing and boxing lessons help to develop pupils' self-confidence and resilience.

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

The school is unwavering in its ambition to prepare pupils to return to mainstream school or to successfully go on to post-16 education. Typically, pupils achieve this. Pupils study for GCSEs in English, mathematics and science alongside a range of vocational courses, which meet their individual aspirations well.

The school has thought carefully about the overarching curriculum offer. It has designed a curriculum that considers the different starting points of pupils when they join the school. In most subjects, the school has carefully thought out how topics and concepts link together to help pupils to know and remember more over time.

In other subjects, revisions to the curriculum are at an earlier stage. In these subjects, the school has not identified clearly enough what pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. This means that teachers lack clarity about the knowledge that pupils require for subsequent learning. Sometimes, teachers move on to new learning before pupils have fully grasped concepts and ideas. This hinders some pupils from learning all that they should.

Teachers have received effective training to gain the subject-specialist knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum well. In the main, teachers select resources and activities that engage pupils in purposeful learning. When pupils join the school, there are effective assessment strategies in place which help staff to swiftly establish

pupils' starting points and to design appropriate learning pathways. However, assessment processes to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum are underdeveloped. Some teachers do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum to address pupils' misunderstandings. This means that pupils' misconceptions and gaps in learning are not identified and go unchecked.

The school has made reading a priority. It identifies pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge and provides effective programmes of reading support. This ensures that these pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, can catch up with their peers. Increasingly, pupils are supported to read more widely. For example, during the daily breakfast club, pupils read from a range of texts, including a daily newspaper and books from a culturally diverse range of authors.

The school successfully unpicks pupils' additional needs and any barriers to learning that they may have. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience a smooth transition into the school through a carefully crafted settling-in period. Staff are provided with up-to-date information on the additional learning needs of individual pupils. The school makes sure that staff receive frequent training, which helps them to tailor learning and extra support to meet pupils' individual needs.

Typically, pupils behave well. Pupils appreciate the individual attention that staff give them. This helps pupils to stay focused. Pupils feel confident to tell staff if they are feeling dysregulated and need some breathing space. Staff use successful strategies to help pupils to feel comfortable if they are feeling unsettled or anxious.

Many pupils start at the school with a poor track record of attendance. The school accurately identifies the difficulties that prevent pupils from attending school regularly. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school, including some who are disadvantaged, remains too high. This means that these pupils miss valuable learning opportunities.

Through personal, social, health and economic education, the school carefully considers the important skills and knowledge that pupils will need for their future lives. Pupils learn about healthy and safe relationships, mental and physical health and online safety. Additionally, there are opportunities for pupils to get involved in the wider community, for example, through their participation in a university's 'BeeWell' project and their enterprising work at the Christmas markets.

Pupils receive quality careers advice and guidance. They meet with independent careers advisers to discuss their careers choices. This information helps them to decide appropriate next steps when they leave the school.

Staff feel well supported. They highly value the comprehensive training and support that they receive. Staff appreciate the school's actions to look after their well-being and workload.

The proprietor has an accurate understanding of the school's performance. It fully holds leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. The proprietor has robust systems in place to ensure that the independent school standards ('the standards') are met consistently and securely.

The school completes risk assessments for any activities that pupils engage in, including when on trips and visits. It ensures that suitable arrangements are put in place to keep pupils safe. The proprietor has also ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In some subjects, the school is in the process of defining the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This hinders teachers from supporting pupils to develop and deepen their knowledge as well as they should. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are clear about the most important things that pupils need to know and remember.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough how well pupils have learned new subject content. As a result, teachers do not reshape learning as well as they should to help pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that teachers accurately identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they can learn well.
- Some pupils, including some who are disadvantaged and some with SEND, do not attend school regularly enough. This further exacerbates the gaps in these pupils' learning. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to improve their rates of attendance.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148542
<b>DfE registration number</b>	352/6016
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322520
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	14
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Progress Schools Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Charlotte Charnley (also known as Charlotte Barton)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Kanis
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£17,500 to £54,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 543 9767
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:gortonps@progress-schools.co.uk">gortonps@progress-schools.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	28 to 30 June 2022

## Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was 28 to 30 June 2022.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. This headteacher has been in post since October 2023.
- The school provides longer-term placements for pupils who have disengaged from education, have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from education.
- Most pupils join the school with significant gaps in learning. Many have not engaged in education for a long period of time prior to joining the school.
- The school is based at the Hideout Youth Zone, 1 Queens Avenue, Manchester M12 5PX.
- The school is registered to admit up to 35 pupils.

## 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of the proprietor body and the headteacher. They also spoke with other senior leaders, subject leaders and a representative of a local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and creative arts. They talked to leaders and staff about the curriculums in these subjects. They also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered. They looked at pupils' work and visited lessons. An inspector also evaluated the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 reviewed the school's policies and documentation related to pupils' welfare and their education. They talked with staff and pupils about pupils'

personal development and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.

- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the standards. As part of these checks, an inspector made a tour of the school's premises, accompanied by a school leader.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses, as well as for Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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