

# Progress Schools - Northamptonshire

8 Notre Dame Mew, Northampton NN1 2BG

**Inspection date**

6 November 2024

**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) to 2(1)(b)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(d)*

- At the previous standard inspection, inspectors found that the curriculum did not identify the more complex knowledge that helped pupils to deepen their understanding across the subjects studied. In some subjects, the sequence of learning was disjointed.
- Inspectors found that, in some subjects, pupils did not study a curriculum that was well matched to their age or ability. Teachers did not always adapt the curriculum sufficiently well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school ensured that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were identified accurately. While individual plans identified how pupils were supported to develop their social and emotional skills, the support they were offered in terms of their academic learning was less clearly defined.
- The school did not have a system in place to support pupils to read accurately or fluently.
- The school limited pupils' opportunities for their next steps in education as the range of accreditations and qualifications on offer to pupils was limited.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the school has carried out a review of its curriculum. This review has led to improvements. Curriculum plans and schemes of work are well sequenced and clearly identify key knowledge. The school has also identified the disciplinary knowledge that runs through each subject.
- The school has prioritised developing staff expertise. Staff have been trained to deliver the curriculum. Assessment systems have been put in place. Staff have received further training regarding the use of assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Nevertheless, staff are not consistently able to adapt the curriculum to ensure that it is sufficiently well matched to the needs of each pupil.
- Pupils' individual education plans vary in quality. They do not consistently address the barriers that prevent pupils from learning well. Their social and emotional needs are

often absent from these plans. They do not explicitly identify how pupils will be supported to engage in their learning.

- The school has introduced a new programme to teach reading. A small number of staff have been trained to deliver this programme. Too many pupils have not been assessed and, as a result, are not getting the help they need to become confident readers. This hinders their ability to access the curriculum.
- Too many pupils miss significant learning because they do not attend school regularly. While the school checks that pupils are safe when they are absent, it has not strategically addressed pupil absence quickly enough. Currently, the school is seeking to appoint a 'community teacher' so that pupils can be educated at home before being gradually reintegrated back into school.
- The school has developed a wider offer for the accreditations and qualifications. For example, the school has applied to be a centre for GCSEs. This means that Year 11 pupils may be able to take national examinations on site if the application is successful.
- These requirements of the independent school standards (the standards) in this part remain unmet.

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

#### *Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)*

- The school completes the required checks to ensure that the adults in school are safe to work with children.
- Leaders with oversight of safeguarding have a secure understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. They are well aware of the risks that pupils face and ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They draw on the expertise of external agencies to support their safeguarding work.
- The school has robust training systems in place for staff. There are regular opportunities for staff to discuss their safeguarding concerns. Staff understand and follow the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- The school makes prompt checks that pupils who are absent from school are safe.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school website.
- The requirements of the standards in these parts continue to be met.

#### *Paragraphs 16 to 16(b)*

- At the previous standard inspection, the school did not have robust procedures in place to evaluate and review risks. The risk assessment policy was not implemented effectively. The school had not established a consistent approach to how risks were identified, who was responsible for each risk assessment and how risk assessments were communicated to the appropriate staff members. The school did not routinely review risk assessments to ensure that they remained suitable.
- The school's systems to implement the risk assessment policy have been robustly addressed since the last inspection. The school has written a clear risk assessment policy. It sets out precisely what should be included in each risk assessment and how these should be completed.

- The school has systems in place to ensure that all staff are made aware of potential risks. Staff have received training to ensure that they can write appropriate risk assessments in line with the school's policy. They understand their responsibilities with regards to identifying and preventing risks.
- This standard is now met.
- The school meets these requirements of the standards in these parts.

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

### *Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(b)*

- The last standard inspection found that not all requirements of the standard related to leadership and management were met. This was because leaders had not ensured that the school consistently met all the standards.
- The action plan submitted to Ofsted in June 2024 was judged to be unacceptable by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Leaders have started to tackle the failed standards identified at the previous standard inspection. They have ensured that appropriate action is taken to identify and address risk. They have taken suitable action to improve the curriculum. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work. There is still significant work to do to ensure that all staff have the skills to meet pupils' needs consistently. The school's work in relation to quality of education as outlined in the independent school standards is hampered by the poor attendance of too many pupils.
- These requirements of this standard remain unmet.

## **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	135754
DfE registration number	941/6070
Inspection number	10359516

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 special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Proprietor	Progress Schools limited
Chair	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Jade Gibson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,375 to £41,400
Telephone number	01604 970320
Website	<a href="http://www.progress-schools.co.uk">www.progress-schools.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@progress-schools.co.uk">info@progress-schools.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 March 2024

## Information about this school

- Progress Schools - Northamptonshire is registered to provide full-time education for up to 50 pupils aged 13 to 16 years.
- The school offers education to pupils with behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have SEND. A very small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have been excluded from their previous provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 12 to 14 March 2024, and the school received the overall judgement of requires improvement.
- Four new members of staff have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## 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.
- Following the standard inspection in March 2024, the DfE required the school to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated the action plan on 13 June 2024. The DfE rejected the action plan.
- This is the school's first monitoring inspection since the previous inspection. The inspection took place without notice.
- The inspector met with the head of school and held a remote meeting with the managing director, who represented the proprietorial body.
- The inspector met with the curriculum manager to discuss the curriculum. They also met remotely with the director of schools to discuss safeguarding and held a telephone conversation with the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector visited lessons, spoke to pupils and reviewed examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered documentation in relation to the curriculum, pupils' individual education plans, policies and examples of risk assessments.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss the curriculum and safeguarding. The inspector reviewed the school's single central record.

## Inspection team

Caroline Poole

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.
- 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 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 independent school standards**

#### **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.

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