

Inspection of Progress Schools - Toxteth

115 Upper Warwick Street, Liverpool L8 8HD

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 December 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?

Typically, pupils who join this school have complex social and emotional needs. Most pupils have attended several other schools or settings and they have been absent from school for long periods of time. The school focuses on building relationships with pupils and their families, so that pupils can re-engage with their education. Most pupils respond positively to this. They feel safe and valued as part of a school community.

The school sets high academic expectations for pupils. Most pupils respond well to this. They trust the staff who work with them and they gradually reconnect with their learning. However, sometimes the curriculum is not matched or delivered well enough to ensure that pupils routinely achieve as highly as they should.

Pupils appreciate that the school sets high standards for their behaviour. They enjoy the calm and productive environment, where they can focus and learn. Pupils receive specialist support to help them to manage their emotions. This helps them to reduce any negative behaviours that have previously been barriers to their learning.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, both as part of their curriculum and beyond. For example, they visit local landmarks, different places of worship and universities. They also raise money for charities. This helps pupils to develop their confidence levels and aspirations for the future.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has made significant positive changes to the overarching curriculum. The curriculum is now more clearly structured and pupils can access more ambitious routes of study and qualifications.

On entry to the school, pupils academic and emotional needs are assessed. The school provides appropriate, individualised support, so that most pupils feel welcomed and start to value their learning. However, at a subject level, the essential knowledge that pupils should learn, and the order in which they learn it, is not matched as well as it should be to pupils' individual needs and starting points. This limits how well teachers can address gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders how deeply some pupils develop a rich body of subject-specific knowledge and how highly they achieve.

Staff now receive regular training about general approaches to teaching and learning. Staff appreciate this investment in their professional development. They are able to balance their workload and deliver the curriculum more effectively than in the past. However, many staff teach subjects that are outside of their area of expertise. The school has not ensured that staff have the subject-specific knowledge that they need to deliver these curriculums as well as they should. This hampers some pupils' achievement.

The school effectively identifies, assesses and supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables them to access the same curriculum as their peers. These pupils experience a smooth transition into the school. The school provides staff with helpful and personalised information about pupils' additional learning needs so that they can help to reduce any barriers. The school provides in-house support, such as counselling, and it works well with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need to engage with their learning.

Reading is valued and prioritised. Pupils now have more opportunities to read. The school accurately identifies when pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge and provides support. However, the support that pupils receive to improve their reading knowledge is not targeted well enough. Some pupils are not able to read with the fluency and confidence that they need to access the more ambitious curriculum that is now on offer. This can hinder their achievements.

Typically, pupils behave well. They respond positively to the clear routines that have been put into place. Staff know pupils well. They use effective support strategies to help pupils manage and regulate any negative behaviours that may affect their learning and social interactions.

The school places improving pupils' attendance high on its agenda. It employs a wide range of strategies to encourage pupils to attend and engage with learning opportunities. From very low starting points, most pupils' attendance improves when they join the school.

The programme to support pupils' personal development is central to the work of the school. This includes personal, social, health and economic education as well as citizenship and life skills lessons. Pupils receive important information so that they can develop into healthy and active participants in modern Britain. For example, they are taught age-appropriate knowledge about how to stay safe linked to topics, such as addiction, sex and relationships and online safety.

The school has an effective programme of careers information, advice and guidance in place, including independent advice. The school provides supported visits that help to raise pupils' aspirations and explore their next steps, for example, to places of potential employment and local colleges. In the last two years, all pupils have progressed to suitable destinations in work, education or training after leaving the school.

The proprietor has effectively implemented more robust systems of leadership since the last inspection, to ensure that the independent school standards ('the standards') are now met consistently and securely.

The school completes appropriate risk assessments for any activities that pupils engage in, both on the school site and when on trips and visits. 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 curriculum content that pupils are taught and the order in which they learn it, are not matched well enough to meet their needs and starting points. This hampers how well some pupils build and deepen their knowledge over time. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about the essential subject-specific knowledge that pupils should know, so that they can build successfully on their prior learning and achieve well.
- Some staff deliver curriculum subjects that are outside of their main areas of expertise. This hinders how effectively they can teach these subjects and so it negatively impacts on some pupils' achievements. The school should ensure that staff have the subject-specific expertise that they need to teach the curriculum effectively.
- Some pupils do not read with sufficient fluency and accuracy. This stops them from getting the most out of the curriculum. The school should ensure that it provides more carefully targeted support to ensure that gaps in pupils' reading knowledge are addressed and pupils catch up quickly.

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	143912
DfE registration number	341/6008
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10342121
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	Charlotte Barton
Headteacher	Gina Lunt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,200 to £56,000
Telephone number	0151 541 1967
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	liverpool@progress-schools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 October 2022

Information about this school

- Since the previous standard inspection, all of the staff that work at the school, including the head of school, have been newly appointed.
- The previous standard inspection took place from 4 to 6 October 2022.
- Since the previous standard inspection, two progress monitoring inspections, commissioned by the Department for Education, have been completed. These took place in July 2023 and January 2024.
- The school is located at 115 Upper Warwick Street, Liverpool L8 8HD.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers 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 school is registered to admit up to 30 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 evaluation 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 these subjects: English, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 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 survey, including the free-text responses. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupil and for staff.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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