



NEWS

ISSUE ONE SEPTEMBER 2016

FIRED UP AND READY TO LEARN



Young people are being given a unique opportunity for high scores in the education stakes with the opening of Progress Schools' new centre in Liverpool.

Operating from one of the city's most exciting youth venues at the Fire Fit Hub Super Youth Zone, this latest venture is a major move in the Progress Schools' mission to offer innovative and flexible education.

With its first intake now in place, the teaching of formal academic subjects is taking place in state-of-the-art classrooms. However, being based at the Fire Fit Hub means students can use its world-class sport, music and cultural facilities.

Head teacher Siôn Hughes said: "Our Liverpool school is truly unique as it's situated in the most amazing environment.

"There's already a culture at the Fire Fit Hub of putting young people at the heart of all its development and operations – what better place is there for our young people to learn and achieve?"

The £5.2m Fire Fit Hub was created as a joint venture for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and a community centre with sports facilities for the use of the local community. Progress Schools' students are able to use a full range of its facilities and equipment which include five-a-side and seven-a-side football pitches, dance and martial arts studio, fitness suite and gym with its weights and boxing ring. There's also a chill-out zone and healthy eating café.

Siôn, who has 20 years' experience in education and training in the UK and in Europe, is joined at Progress Schools Liverpool by five staff members – senior tutor Peter Cunningham, tutor Georgina Bromley, Dominic Saffman, who tutors in PE and sports vocation studies, and teaching assistants Zoe Hughes and Patrick Darnacott.



Learning the ropes: Siôn Hughes (second left) with (left to right) Georgina Bromley, Patrick Darnacott, Dominic Saffman, Peter Cunningham and Zoe Hughes in the Fire Fit Hub boxing ring

WELCOME TO OUR VERY FIRST NEWSLETTER...

Firstly, I hope you have all had a relaxing, enjoyable and safe summer break and I am delighted to welcome you all back to the new 2016/17 academic year.

The first six months of operation at Progress Schools has now passed and we have been working extremely hard over the course of the summer months to get everything in place to have a successful first full academic year.

This is the first of our termly newsletters in which we will seek to provide you with a full picture of the progress we have made across all schools and as a business.

As you will see, we are well on our journey now and look forward to what's to come.

James Madine
Chief Executive Officer



www.progress-schools.co.uk



EFFECTIVE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

By Charlotte Barton, Quality Assurance Manager

SUCCESS IN SUCH A SHORT TIME

Last academic year we had six months to put our stamp on things as Progress Schools so we got busy, quickly. In such a short time we supported almost 150 students who had previously struggled with education. To enable us to do this, we worked with our staff and provided communication days where our sites could share good practice from up and down the country.

The students had a great week in May when we were lucky to have James Riley come in to each school for five half-days with his GANGS - Get Away 'N' Get Safe - programme. Students really engaged and we managed to get them thinking about a different lifestyle choice. Unfortunately, gang life is very often portrayed as glamorous but James really helped to show that this is not the case. Positive feedback came in at the speed of light with one student saying: "I now realise that even if something is happening to someone else, even though I'm not doing anything wrong I am still part of the situation."

Read about the GANGS programme on the back page.



REVISED CURRICULUM

We are so excited for September. I don't know many schools that say that, but we really are!

The reason behind this is our Operational Management Team has been plotting over the last few months to make Progress Schools stand out as independent schools and alternative provision. We were fortunate to have one of these planning meetings on the restored tall ship Glaciere in Quayside Marina, Liverpool (pictured above), as well as a private tour of the vessel which is used as a floating classroom. That really got us thinking outside the box.

We have designed a fantastic curriculum that ensures students get their core academic subjects among a whole host of inspiring topics that will support them in overcoming barriers. These additional topics include lessons in Wellbeing, Skills Build, SMSC and Enrichment alongside Science, Geography and History. We will also be adding Functional Skills, Maths and English iGCSE for students who are with us for a full year.

Our most exciting link yet is with the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and we are excited to be offering this amazing opportunity from September.



SOME GREAT RESULTS

At the end of last term, we also put all of our staff through their paces - we don't wind down for summer! Staff were observed by external company Educating UK and we are more than delighted with the results. We are pleased to say we have some "Outstanding" practice going on at Progress Schools.

Staff were certainly tested at the end of the year. We thought we could make it to the summer to launch our new curriculum but instead our Carlisle school was given notification of its Ofsted inspection two weeks before breaking up for the summer." Despite everything, Carlisle was judged to be the "Good" school it is. Well done, Progress Schools Carlisle!



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OPEN DOOR TO SUPPORT

By Tom Whitlock, Business Development Manager

Progress Schools Ltd prides itself on relationships with other schools and external agencies. We have an open door policy for anyone who can help us to support our students.

As well as the numerous schools we have worked with for long periods of time, we have been lucky enough to start working with some wonderful new schools this year. We have had great pleasure working with Prince William School in Oundle, Brooke Weston Academy in Corby, Nelson Thomlinson and Newman Catholic Schools in Carlisle and the Chiltern Way Academy in Buckinghamshire. We look forward to working with all of our schools and achieving more great outcomes together this year.

Alongside other schools, the work we undertake with external agencies allows us to offer students support and advice from a variety of angles, ensuring they get a holistic approach to their education, wellbeing and development. We are proud to work with many agencies including Inspira, Prospects, Adviza, CAMHS, Multi Systematic Therapy and many, many more.

Our biggest news from the summer is our latest partnership with Marine FC in Liverpool. Progress Schools is sponsoring its youth teams and we are very proud of the new home and away kits with our logo on. There is much more to come with our work with Marine FC - so watch this space!

Read more about this partnership on the back page.

THE NEXT STEPS

Progress Schools is part of a larger group and sister company Progress to Excellence is expert in Apprenticeships. Progress Schools will be liaising with Progress to Excellence to support Apprenticeship learners who require a specific maths and English qualification to complement their framework. We are also able to refer suitable candidates for Apprenticeship roles - a direct progression for our students who are ready.

For those of our students who are not ready, Progress Schools will soon unveil a new and exciting Traineeship programme. This will be ideal for those who are considering an Apprenticeship but don't necessarily want to commit until sure or who need to refine some skills. A Traineeship lasts 12 weeks and mostly consists of a work placement. This can lead on to a full Apprenticeship.

Keep an eye on our social media pages for all vacancies or get in touch for more information at info@progress-schools.co.uk.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Progress Schools Ltd is committed to supporting each of its local communities and, as a result, students started to look at charities they would like to help next year. After some great choices being put forward, they have now voted and the charity to support for academic year 2016/2017 is The Children's Society. Check out the great work they do at www.childrensociety.org.uk and keep an eye out for some great fundraising events coming up throughout the year.



SURVEY FEEDBACK

After a few months we decided to send out surveys to see how we were doing and to help us identify what could be done better. The results have been very encouraging, to say the least.

In our survey to referring schools and parents, 100 per cent of respondents would recommend us to friends, family or colleagues. The same 100 per cent also said that they were satisfied to extremely satisfied with the service we provide. One parent has asked us for more communication. We have duly obliged and will be launching SchoolPod from September. This allows us to text parents in real time - among so many other things - as well as the phone calls we already provide.

In our student survey, 83 per cent of students said they were satisfied to extremely satisfied with their school. We had a call for new computers - although this was already on our list. We are pleased to say that the old technology will have been replaced in almost all schools by the time you are reading this. Students should also be very pleased to see some additional tablets too.

Due to the huge changes taking place for September, we will be sending out new surveys at the end of the month. Watch out for further updates.

PROGRESS SCHOOLS KICKS OFF NEW PARTNERSHIP

New goals are within reach of young people thanks to a partnership between Progress Schools and Liverpool football club Marine FC.

A sponsorship arrangement will see the two organisations working closely together with one aim – to put the interests of young people at the centre of their operations.

Crosby-based Marine, a fan-owned club made up largely of semi-professional players, is rooted in the community – a club run by fans for fans and where young people are pivotal to its ethos of developing and nurturing youth teams as part of the Mariners' "family".

James Madine, Progress Schools chief executive, said: "This partnership is a far-reaching venture for us as it will open the door to vital new experiences and opportunities for the youth of North Merseyside and South Sefton.

"Our students will be able to experience first-hand some of the values that make Marine FC the amazing community and family-orientated club it is. Sponsoring Marine's Under-18 team home and away shirts this season has kicked off our support for the club and there are other joint projects in the pipeline."



James Madine (right) with John Barnes, manager of Marine FC youth teams

Paul Leary, chairman of Marine FC, added: "This is an exciting new partnership and provides a perfect match associated with young people and their aspirations to do better."

HARD-HITTING MESSAGE TO HALT GANG CULTURE



Reject gang culture: GANGS founder James Riley

James Riley, founder of GANGS, the hard-hitting and innovative Get Away 'N' Get Safe programme, has one mission – to inspire young people to reject gang lifestyle.

It's a message he's been delivering to young learners at Progress Schools. And if he gets just one person to turn his or her back on gang culture, he's happy.

James set up GANGS after being a probation officer for 18 years, the last five working among urban street gangs and organised crime groups on Merseyside. He travels across the UK to deliver his programme to

schools, alternative education providers and youth services in a bid to show young people they can take control of their future by making the right decisions.

Participants in his workshop sessions age from nine to 16.

James, who received a High Sheriff Award and Commendation from Merseyside Police, said: "In my years as a probation officer and latterly working among street gangs, there's virtually nothing I haven't seen or experienced first-hand. That's why I'm passionate getting young people to stand up and reject gang lifestyle where there are no winners, only losers.

"Gang culture is a massive problem in the UK and can only be solved by young people walking away, turning their backs on gangs and street violence which will ultimately prevent further victims of gang-related violence and create safer communities, free from fear and anti-social behaviour.

James, who describes his delivery as "personal" rather than "authoritarian", admits his five-day workshops and some of its harrowing video content can be "near the knuckle".

But he adds: "To many of these kids, this is reality and not TV drama so I show what gang culture is actually like and what can happen if they get involved. The end result for them can usually end in either one of two ways – a very long prison sentence or death.

"Shocking this may be but the hard-hitting message that putting their safety and their future before their gang mates has to come across forcefully.

"If I can persuade even one person in each group that being in school is preferable to being in a police station or being locked up, that makes me happy."

For more information visit www.getaway-n-getsafe.co.uk.



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If you would like to contribute to our next newsletter please email info@progress-schools.co.uk.