

Inspection of Progress Schools – Stockport

Belgrave House, 211 Chestergate, Stockport SK3 0AN

Inspection dates: 4–6 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff make sure that pupils feel welcomed and valued in this school. The pupils we spoke with told us that they like the small size of the school. They feel that staff look after them and keep them safe. This helps pupils to have confidence and trust staff. Pupils and staff told us that the school is like a family. Pupils know and accept each other. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils know that they are expected to behave well and attend regularly. They usually do. The classes are very small. This means that pupils get a lot of attention and encouragement from their teachers. It also lets teachers make sure that the curriculum they are teaching is adjusted to help each pupil. There are two classes. One is for pupils in Years 7 and 8, and the other is for older pupils.

Pupils told us that there is no bullying in the school. However, they said that there is sometimes 'banter' between pupils. Sometimes, this is not thoughtful or kind. The school has a clear system to help pupils understand when their behaviour is not good enough. It is still quite early in the school's life, but it has already helped pupils who have had poor experiences in their schools in the past to start to want to join in education.

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

The curriculum is based on the approaches used in the proprietor's other schools. The topics in the schemes of work (SoW) are well organised. The lessons they include are arranged in a sensible order so that pupils can build up what they know. Pupils often have gaps in their learning from the past. Most pupils have had a disturbed education before joining this school. This has been because their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have made learning hard or because they have had poor attendance. Pupils' attendance in the past has been made worse because they have been excluded from school.

Teachers use their detailed knowledge of pupils to plan pupils' learning. Pupils in the younger class have often not successfully completed key stage 2 in primary school. The curriculum plans provided by leaders at the start of the school year covered ideas normally included in key stage 3. Leaders have adjusted the curriculum for English and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC) to better match pupils' previous knowledge and fill gaps from key stage 2. However, they have not done this in other subjects, including mathematics.

In the school's curriculum, rather less time is spent on academic subjects than in many other schools. This means that more work is planned for key stage 4 English than can be easily covered in the time available. However, staff provide an extensive and well-planned programme of teaching and other activities to support pupils' personal development. This includes lessons in SMSC, current affairs, careers and well-being, as well as other support, such as regular reviews with pupils of their individual education and development plans. Pupils take part in interesting visits out

of school, such as to a local synagogue and to a mosque. These help them to develop a wider view of British society.

The school has not been operating long enough for pupils to have achieved any external qualifications. However, teachers make sure that learning in key stage 4 is matched to the assessments that pupils will eventually complete. The school has already had considerable success in improving pupils' attitudes and attendance. This has helped pupils to become more successful in their learning. Pupils are better at writing longer pieces of work in English. However, they still need to develop other basic knowledge and skills, such as in spelling and presenting their work in ways that support further learning.

Pupils are well supervised at all times. However, from time to time, some pupils do not behave as well as they should. For example, they may swear or leave lessons without permission. However, any such incidents are well managed by staff. More serious incidents of poor behaviour reduced over the school's first term. Some pupils have part-time timetables. This is especially so early in pupils' time at the school. While this arrangement is short term so that pupils can settle in, it means that they have less time for learning in school.

Leaders have ensured that the school has made a good start. The proprietor insists that leaders complete regular checks on how successful the school is. This has helped the school to develop so far. Many of the school's policies are the same as those in the proprietor's other schools. Sometimes, these general policies do not link closely enough to the developing practice in this school.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards (ISS). For example, the buildings are suitably equipped and maintained, and the curriculum includes a broad range of experiences for pupils. All the required information for parents, carers and others is made available on the proprietor's website. This website includes a separate page for this school.

Leaders have prepared a plan that sets out how they will reduce any barriers that may get in the way of the learning of pupils with SEND. This plan also shows that leaders have thought about how any people with mobility difficulties may be able to gain access to the school's facilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding arrangements follow the systems and procedures already successfully established in the proprietor's other schools. Leaders recognise the particular safeguarding risks that could affect pupils with special educational needs.

Leaders made some minor amendments to the school's safeguarding policy during this inspection. This was to ensure that it fully reflected the most recent national guidance about keeping children safe.

The proprietor has thorough procedures for checking that staff are suitable before they start to work at the school. All staff complete training about safeguarding as part of their training to be ready to teach at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The SoW used in the school are those provided by the proprietor. While these are tried and tested in other schools, they do not always match the previous learning of pupils closely enough or the time available for each subject in this school. This means that they are less helpful to teachers in planning how to teach the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that all SoW more closely reflect the needs and attainment of pupils, including, for example, the SoWs for mathematics at key stage 3 and English at key stage 4.
- The strategy of using part-time timetables for pupils to help them rejoin education, or in response to changes in their behaviour, helps pupils to settle in to school. However, it also means that pupils have less time for their studies and risk missing out on subjects taught when they are not in school. Leaders must continue and build their strategies to reduce pupils' part-time timetables so that pupils benefit as quickly as possible from the full subject curriculum and personal development opportunities available.
- Pupils handwriting, presentation, spelling and punctuation is often weak. This limits pupils' pride in what they are achieving and makes it harder for them to build their sense of success in their learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils' basic literacy knowledge and skills are further developed as part of the curriculum.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147235
DfE registration number	356/6013
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10128829
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Progress Schools Limited
Chair	James Madine
Headteacher	Sion Hughes (Headteacher), Beth Garner (Executive headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,000
Telephone number	0161 519 4819
Website	www.progress-schools.co.uk
Email address	StockportPS@progress-schools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection of the school. The school was registered by the Department for Education on 28 August 2019. The school has been operating for just over one term.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils. This is at Project Inc.
- All pupils currently at the school are placed there by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. All pupils have education health and care plans relating to their SEND.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- During this inspection, we looked closely at how the curriculum is provided in English, mathematics, science, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. We talked with senior leaders, members of staff and pupils. We examined plans for the curriculum, including the schemes of work used at the school. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' books.
- We gathered evidence about pupils' behaviour and attitudes, their personal development, and the school's leadership and management throughout the inspection. We met with leaders to consider these aspects, held discussions with the chief executive officer of Progress Schools Limited and talked with pupils. We had telephone calls with parents, and with a representative of the local authority.
- We examined the school's approach to safeguarding pupils. To do this, we used our discussions with leaders, other staff and pupils to find about the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and whether these work properly. We looked at documents, including the school's safeguarding policy and the record of safeguarding checks on staff.
- We checked the school's compliance with the ISS. As part of this, we toured the school's premises accompanied by leaders.
- We scrutinised documents, including school policies, risk assessments, minutes of meetings concerning the school's governance and records of evaluation of the school's work.
- We were not able to use Ofsted's questionnaires for pupils and staff in order to gather evidence about their views, because we received no responses. Similarly, too few parents completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, for the responses to give us a broad picture. We used our telephone conversations with parents to understand how happy they are with the school.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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