

Inspection of Progress School

Gough Lane, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire PR5 6AQ

Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Progress School is a lovely place to be. Pupils arrive at school with big smiles. They are warmly greeted each morning by nurturing staff. Pupils know that they are highly valued. Staff treat pupils with the utmost kindness and respect. They keep pupils safe.

Pupils quickly learn that their opinions matter. Skilled staff help pupils communicate their feelings. Pupils' personalities and interests are reflected in how they choose to decorate their rooms. From bright pink walls with a stage for singing, to a khaki-coloured calm space, pupils have rooms that they enjoy spending time in.

Staff have high ambitions for each pupil. A team of professionals work together to ensure that each pupil achieves well.

Pupils enjoy the wealth of trips and visits to the local community and further afield. Pupils visit the school farm to grow vegetables and care for animals. They enjoy the wonder and awe of the natural world, such as when fell walking in the countryside. Pupils visit lakes, waterfalls and mountains.

The impact of the school's behavioural policy is significant. Pupils develop strategies to understand and manage their behaviour. Staff are experts in helping pupils to stay relaxed and ready to learn.

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

The headteacher is determined that pupils in the school will thrive. She leads a highly motivated team of staff. All work with skill, enthusiasm and kindness to help pupils achieve the aims of the curriculum.

The carefully planned and ambitious curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' needs. Staff develop pupils' understanding across a wide range of subjects. Skilled teaching staff plan activities that are precisely matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Teachers meet the range of pupils' needs extremely well. Pupils achieve their best.

When pupils start school, leaders set aspirational targets for them to work towards. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. They plan small steps in learning that build on what pupils already know. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils practise and improve their throwing skills. In design technology (DT), staff are meticulous in planning progressive opportunities to help pupils gain a range of skills when cooking. The carefully planned curriculum helps pupils to experience success both personally and academically.

Leaders ensure that staff have a firm understanding of the curriculum. Staff meet on a regular basis to share and discuss curriculum plans. The school's therapy team

provides precise and expert guidance. This ensures that staff meet pupils' diverse needs effectively.

Leaders place communication and emotional regulation at the centre of pupils' development. Staff deliver inspiring and effective sessions to develop pupils' communication. Non-verbal pupils are given effective tools to communicate their feelings and emotions. Staff are successful in helping pupils to improve their communication skills.

Leaders give a high priority to teaching pupils to read. Pupils practise their reading skills by reading a wide range of texts. These include books, recipes and newspapers. To support pupils with early reading skills, staff share rhymes and re-read favourite stories. Pupils are highly engaged in sensory storytimes. They enjoy the wide range of props and experiences staff use to immerse them in stories. Staff make sure that pupils have lots of practice to improve their comprehension skills. Teachers ensure that pupils learn important techniques such as retrieval and inference.

The school's values thread through the curriculum. Pupils are determined to earn 'wow' awards by showing these values. For example, they show resilience in their learning and consideration for others. In DT, we saw pupils working with perseverance to prepare and cook a meal. In a PE lesson visited, pupils applauded each other for their achievements.

Leaders plan a wealth of experiences to support pupils with character development. All experiences are carefully planned and closely matched to pupils' developmental stage and individual needs. Planning is in small steps, to ensure that pupils succeed. For example, pupils gradually build the confidence and knowledge to visit local community shops and cafés. Pupils raise funds for a range of charities.

Older students have a wide range of experiences to prepare them for work experience and beyond. They learn important skills and knowledge for their adult lives. Students carry out a range of roles in school and in the local community. Some students earn wages. They learn about budgeting. Leaders work closely with parents and carers, students and other professionals to ensure that students have a successful transition when leaving school.

The school buildings are well maintained, clean and well resourced. Classrooms are bright and attractive. There is a garden area for pupils to get fresh air at breaktimes. Leaders make full use of the school's nearby farm, local parks and cycling areas. Pupils access weekly swimming sessions away from the school site.

Leaders make sure that all staff follow the school's health and safety requirements, including fire regulations and risk assessments. The headteacher keeps parents well informed about the work of the school. The school's policies are available to parents and others.

Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are met. The headteacher, governing body and proprietors are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety and welfare take the highest priority for leaders. Staff are effective in keeping pupils safe. Leaders ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows them. All staff have very regular training. Staff are alert to any changes in pupils' behaviour.

Leaders work well with other agencies to support pupils. Adults in school make sure that pupils are looked after well. Staff act quickly if they have concerns.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe and behave responsibly in different situations, including when using the internet.

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	131138
DfE registration number	888/6030
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10128778
Type of school	Independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Wendy Sparling
Headteacher	Siobhan Partington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,472 to 114,232
Telephone number	01772 334832
Website	www.progressschool.co.uk
Email address	siobhanpartington@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	25–27 April 2017

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 25–27 April 2017.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Progress School is an independent special day school that caters for up to 12 pupils between the ages of seven and 19 years with complex autism spectrum disorder and associated complex learning needs and challenging behaviours.

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.

- We met with the headteacher and the lead teacher. In addition, we held discussions with staff.
- Design technology, reading, mathematics and physical education were considered as part of this inspection. Inspection activities included: discussions with leaders; visits to lessons; discussions with teachers; scrutiny of pupils' work; and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- We also scrutinised pupils' work across the full range of learning. We looked at teachers' curriculum plans.
- We looked at portfolios of practical work by older students.
- We visited speech, language and communication therapy sessions.
- We met with members of the school's therapy team.
- We held telephone conversations with two parents and examined the school's own parent survey responses.
- We spoke with representatives from three of the local authorities where pupils live or from where they are placed.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the independent school standards, the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- We scrutinised information about pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- We carried out an inspection of the school premises.
- We met with the regional director and the operations director from the proprietary body.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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