

# Liverpool Progressive School

Rice Lane, Walton, Liverpool, Merseyside L9 1NR

## Inspection dates

10–12 April 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Since the last inspection, excellent leadership at all levels, including by the headteacher and from the proprietor, has ensured that the school continues to provide an outstanding and improving education. The school clearly meets the independent school standards.
- The dedicated and passionate staff address barriers to pupils' learning and relentlessly seek successful strategies to support them. Teachers teach what pupils need to learn to make a successful start to their adult lives. Staff work closely with families to learn from them how to best help their children and, when needed, to offer excellent support to families.
- Almost all pupils join this school having previously had very negative experiences of education and having displayed very challenging patterns of behaviour. This school does a remarkable and highly successful job in helping pupils understand and manage their own behaviour. There is a highly positive culture throughout the school.
- Pupils from a very wide range of starting points make excellent progress.
- Pupils who move into the sixth form provision benefit from the same excellent standards of care and teaching. All progress rapidly and on completion of their course many are ready to move to mainstream college.
- Levels of care and welfare are outstanding. Staff know their pupils' personalities and needs in great detail. Staff can therefore, with great skill, calm pupils and support them when they feel insecure. Staff are very observant and know, often before a pupil knows, when something is not right.
- Pupils spend their days in Liverpool Progressive School feeling happy, secure and successful. Their levels of achievement are excellent. This was summed up by one parent who described her son's school as 'the best part of his life'.
- As systems to record pupils' development and achievements have evolved, they have become fragmented. Although pupils' progress in different areas is closely monitored, tracking systems do not provide a holistic overview of pupils' social, emotional and academic development over time.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should further develop the coherence of their systems for tracking pupils' progress to enable staff to consistently provide the precise support necessary for pupils to make even greater strides in their social, emotional and academic development.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The work of the headteacher, very well supported by both the previous and current proprietors, has ensured that the school improves and continues to provide an outstanding education. Liverpool Progressive School has a very distinctive ethos that guides every member of staff to excel in providing the highest quality of care and education. Staff are proud to work here because they know they are making a huge difference to the lives of pupils, and often to pupils' families too.
- The induction of pupils into the school is very thorough and carefully managed. At the end of their induction period, pupils are settled and learning well. This happens with every pupil because staff take time to understand them. Staff have a good, detailed understanding of pupils' emotional, physical and educational needs. Staff adapt to the needs of individual pupils expertly. Consequently, pupils benefit from flexible and highly personalised provision, which ensures that the needs of every pupil are met. It is testament to the school's success that, since the last inspection, no pupil has left Liverpool Progressive School unless they have turned 19 or moved from the area.
- Professional development for staff in Liverpool Progressive School takes many forms. Leaders identify talented teaching assistants and support and train them to take on further responsibilities. Many complete teaching qualifications and some become promoted to very senior positions within the school. Training and professional development on a more routine level is also highly successful. Consequently, systems function very successfully and knowledge is spread widely throughout the staff.
- At the last inspection, measuring the small steps of progress that pupils make was identified as an area that required improvement. The school has adopted a system to do this. Leaders are managing this well and teaching assistants are becoming more proficient in using it. This improvement is typical of other systems that have been introduced over recent years. There are effective systems for recording pupils' emotional progress, their behavioural improvement and other aspects of their development. These systems each provide useful information that enables leaders to carefully track the progress that pupils are making. However, these systems operate in isolation and the school does not have a clear picture of each pupil's holistic development. Senior leaders can describe in detail the learning and emotional development of each pupil. However, they have not established systems that would enable a broader and more precise evaluation of each pupil's overall progress since joining the school. Leaders can convincingly demonstrate that pupils make outstanding progress from their different starting points since joining the school. However, more coherent systems for tracking pupils' progress would help staff to support pupils to make even greater strides in their learning.
- Just as all staff take great care to ensure that pupils' education meets their individual needs, staff also take great care in preparing pupils to move on beyond this school. It is a measure of how much parents and carers, and local authorities, value the education provided by Liverpool Progressive School that pupils typically do not leave at 16, but stay on to the sixth-form provision within the school. Staff work with pupils and parents to develop a clear training path beyond school. Some pupils extend their basic and independent living skills at a centre for 19- to 25-year-olds. Others progress to

mainstream colleges, pursuing vocational courses matching their interests.

- Staff create opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence in unfamiliar situations and to learn about the diversity of the world beyond their home and school life. Pupils' progress in these aspects is as considerable as in other aspects of their learning and development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Staff work closely with families and carers to promote strong personal development and a coherent education across both the school and at home. This highly positive liaison develops pupils' confidence and sense of security. When asked, parents are effusive in their praise for the work of the school. For example, one parent said her son 'just loves going to school'. Another felt that the most significant factor in providing an excellent education was that staff 'really value the children'. Parents are provided with high quality and frequent reports on their children's learning and development.
- The school is very well administered. Health and safety records are diligently and accurately recorded. The building is maintained to a high standard. Communication systems with parents are efficient and effective. The proprietor and school senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring that the independent school standards are fully met.

## **Governance**

- The governing body consists of six employees of the Keys Group, which is the proprietorial organisation.
- The previous proprietor worked well with the headteacher to help the school to improve upon its already high standards. The new proprietor of the Keys Group has further strengthened governance, and brings to the organisation an even wider range of experience in running a large number of schools.
- The new governors have recognised the quality of the school they have acquired and have made no significant changes. They have, however, been able to provide the school with a fresh and accurate evaluation. They have managed the restructuring of senior leadership very well and, when needed, have stepped into more practical roles. For example, they have been directly involved in the running of the school on a short-term basis.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is suitable and published on the school's website.
- The most effective aspect of safeguarding is the approach adopted by staff. They are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are safe both within and beyond the school. Staff have been very well trained. Systems and procedures are clear and followed assiduously. Staff are highly tuned and sensitive to any indication that something might not be right with a pupil. If they have concerns, without hesitation, staff will refer to a senior colleague. Pupils have considerable trust in the staff and would confidently consult them, had they any concerns.
- The school works very well with other agencies who have responsibility to promote the safety of children.

- Teachers ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe. This includes, for example, when using any form of computer equipment or smartphones, when being out and about in their communities and when at home.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Outstanding**

- Creative, dedicated and aspirational staff ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and make excellent progress. Staff have a clear understanding of how much individual pupils know and what they can do. They use this to help them plan challenging learning activities. Staff ensure that pupils experience a range of highly appropriate and enjoyable activities throughout their day.
- Staff take great care in getting pupils ready to learn, by ensuring that they are in an appropriate frame of mind. Staff ensure that a positive and uplifting spirit permeates the school. Staff always appear happy and this establishes a positive and calm ethos.
- Staff often teach pupils individually, focusing on developing their communication and number skills. For most-able pupils, most of their English and mathematics is taught one-to-one. Social and emotional skills, teamwork and the promotion of self-esteem are developed, almost always, through small-group or paired activities. The school helps pupils to adapt to new people by working with outside groups who occasionally work with pupils in the school. For example, all pupils look forward to working with a group who conduct work around army service. Pupils learn to work and play together and develop trust in each other and in other adults.
- Many pupils are provided with therapies which are designed to help them with a wide range of needs. Therapies include speech and language, occupational, music and sensory activities. These are very well targeted and contribute significantly to the rapid improvement in pupils' development and learning.
- School leaders constantly evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. All staff are very adaptable and fully prepared to try a wide variety of activities and methods to ensure that pupils make sustained progress.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

### **Outstanding**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' education in this school is outstanding because staff work so hard and successfully to promote these particular aspects. Staff invest considerable time in getting to know each pupil, their histories, their previous school experiences and what life is like for them out of school. This knowledge helps staff to prepare their pupils for learning with great skill, so when pupils sit down to learn, they feel secure, happy and valued.
- Over time, pupils' self-esteem is systematically developed through encouragement, success and learning how to work with others. Pupils' confidence develops quickly and, soon, pupils become more adventurous in trying new things and become open to new experiences.
- Pupils feel very well looked after. Pupils trust staff to do their very best to help them.

Parents also recognise the skill of staff in helping their children develop. Parents value the highly positive relationships between home and school.

- The school tries to eliminate any feeling of threat that pupils may experience while in their care. Staff work hard to help pupils understand their own feelings and the feelings of others. There is no bullying in the school.
- As pupils learn to become more independent, they learn how to be safe and how to respond if they become anxious.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Most pupils join this school following extended periods of very unsuccessful schooling. Their frustration at not being understood or not treated well in the past has manifested itself in poor and sometimes extreme behaviour. Very often these pupils have missed extended periods in education. Once settled in this school, the transformation in pupils' attitudes and behaviour is truly remarkable. All pupils learn to behave very well and, with only very occasional outbursts, treat everyone with respect and take their learning seriously.
- Staff are successful in helping pupils to learn how to behave because they get to know every pupil's personality and needs in great detail. This enables staff to anticipate stressful situations for their pupils and teach them the skills to cope with these. They teach pupils strategies that help them to manage their own behaviour very successfully. When taught individually, pupils say that they concentrate well for 'long periods'. In groups, discussion is harmonious and pupils cooperate well together, showing good listening skills and respect for one another.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent and above the average for all schools. This achievement is particularly significant when considering that for some pupils attendance was poor in their previous schools.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

## **Outstanding**

- Pupils start their education at Liverpool Progressive School with a vast range of skills and abilities. However, levels of attainment are considerably below average for their age, even for the most able pupils at the school.
- From their own starting points, pupils make excellent progress in learning how to communicate and understand numbers. For some, this may be in the form of signing or using cards to represent their emotions or ideas. Other pupils will be ready to sit level 1 examinations in foundation skills by the age of 19.
- Pupils experience a highly personalised and wide-ranging curriculum. All pupils learn how to work in groups, but at their own level. For example, they will learn, in their own terms, about history, geography and technology. They will develop artistic skills and understand about languages other than spoken English. Most-able pupils will learn very successfully the skills and understanding they will need in the world of work, including about money and enterprise. Teachers are fully aware of the potential of individual pupils. Through excellent support and challenge, teachers ensure that all make excellent progress, including the most able.

- Where relevant, and to suit a pupil's own needs and interests, pupils sit external examinations and are very successful in them. These qualifications help them to gain enrolment onto suitable courses beyond school.
- All pupils make excellent progress in developing their social and emotional understanding. This enables them to improve the way they work in groups and helps them to gain enormously from the extensive range of activities that happen when staff take them into the local community. Pupils go to the local swimming pool, shopping, use transport and develop many other skills that will help them move on to adult life.
- All pupils in this school experience some form of disadvantage. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and all have an education, health and care plan. The school has identified those pupils who the government describes as being disadvantaged by their economic circumstances. All pupils make outstanding progress, no matter what their circumstances or abilities.
- Staff ensure that all pupils are able to understand some complex concepts relating to British values, equality of opportunity and extremism. The most able pupils can discuss these concepts. Most pupils with lower starting points can communicate their emotions about right and wrong.
- Due to pupils' histories of significantly disrupted education and sometimes severe learning difficulties, all pupils start at Liverpool Progressive School much further behind in their learning than would be expected for their age. The number of pupils sitting external examinations is very small. Consequently, analysing published examination information provides little meaningful information about the school's effectiveness.

### **Sixth form provision**

### **Outstanding**

- The number of students participating in the school's sixth-form provision is very small. However, those that do continue receive the excellent levels of care, support and teaching they experienced before the sixth form.
- Students continue to study subjects which interest them and will benefit them in their future lives. Much of their work is formally assessed through externally examined modules. In addition, students develop life skills which will prepare them for independent or semi-independent living in their futures. They continue to build their confidence, particularly when confronted with new situations or new people.
- Through the activities students experience in the sixth form, they make excellent progress. Teaching is highly effective, as staff know how to help individuals and tailor their teaching accordingly. Students' attitudes to their learning are highly positive. They participate fully and enthusiastically in activities.
- Leadership of the sixth form is excellent. Staff monitor the effectiveness of teaching closely, and all staff are prepared to adapt their teaching to ensure the full and enthusiastic engagement of the students.
- Staff take great care in preparing their students to make successful transitions from this school to their next places of learning. Staff ensure that all students work with an external and independent careers adviser. Work experience takes many forms and is always very valuable and meaningful to the students.

- Since the last inspection, all students who have started in the sixth form have completed their schooling there. All have progressed onto highly appropriate and meaningful further training or courses.

## School details

Unique reference number	133309
DfE registration number	341/6047
Inspection number	10043375

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Keys Group
Chair	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Linda Dunbavand
Annual fees (day pupils)	£81,623
Telephone number	0151 5254004
Website	<a href="http://www.liverpoolprogressiveschool.co.uk">www.liverpoolprogressiveschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:lindadunbavand@keysgrouppce.co.uk">lindadunbavand@keysgrouppce.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24 March 2015

## Information about this school

- Liverpool Progressive School is located in purpose-built premises in the Walton area of Liverpool. It operates solely from this site.
- The Keys Group took over the proprietorial role of the school in April of 2017.
- The previous deputy headteacher left Liverpool Progressive School at the end of last year to become a headteacher in a different school. Subsequently, two new appointments

were made to the roles of assistant headteacher.

- Liverpool Progressive School is registered with the Department for Education to support the educational needs of eight- to 19-year-olds who are experiencing social, emotional and behaviour learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are usually referred to the school through their local education authority, social services or health authority. A number are in the care of their local authorities.
- The school is registered to admit up to 33 pupils. There are currently 17 pupils on roll, in the age range 13 to 19 years. Pupils are grouped according to their individual stage of development and personal, social and learning needs.
- The school does not make use of the services of any alternative providers.
- The school was last inspected in March 2015.
- The headteacher was not present during the inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Throughout the inspection, the inspector worked closely with the proprietorial group's national director of education and regional director of education. He also worked closely with the school's two assistant headteachers and other senior staff.
- The inspector talked to pupils. The inspector spoke to individual teachers. He took account of 16 questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection. He also spoke to three parents by telephone. The inspector spoke to a representative of one of the local authorities who send pupils to this school. There were too few parental responses made to Parent View for the inspector to consider.
- School documents were scrutinised, including: safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector visited classrooms to speak with pupils, look at their work and observe their learning. The inspector looked at pupils' work which captured their learning over a long period of time. He observed group sessions and individual learning activities.
- Senior leaders were party to all of the inspection activities.

## Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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