

Compass School Southwark

Drummond Road, Bermondsey, SE16 2BT

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Require improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Some students are not making good progress. This includes some boys, some disadvantaged students and some students with special educational needs.
- The progress of students across subjects is variable.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Too much teaching does not focus enough on the needs of students who are underperforming.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able. Not enough of the most able students make the progress they should.
- Some teaching does not ensure that students deepen their understanding.
- Teachers' written feedback is having too little impact on students' learning and progress
- Teachers do not always manage the behaviour of students well enough in lessons.
- Low-level disruption by a minority of students is too frequent. Some students have not developed the skills to consistently manage their behaviour well. This disrupts their learning and slows their progress.
- The attendance of some students is too low.
- Leaders' plans are not explicit enough about the pace of improvement expected for the quality of teaching and students' attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that plans for the spending of pupil premium funding are sufficiently detailed. It is not clear how much improvement leaders expect from funded activities.
- Middle leadership is underdeveloped. Some middle leaders do not provide effective subject leadership.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal and other senior leaders are steadily securing improvements to the quality of teaching and students' attendance, behaviour and progress.
- Many students at the academy are making good progress. Students with low starting points and girls do particularly well.
- Students have a good understanding of how to stay safe. The vast majority of students show good care towards each other.
- Students are well cared for and safeguarded at the academy. Leaders and teachers know students very well and pay careful attention to their welfare.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring consistent equality of opportunity. They are focused on improving students' outcomes by doing all they can to ensure that every student has the opportunity to participate in all types of activities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons to observe teaching and learning, scrutinise work and talk to students. These visits were undertaken jointly with the Principal.
- The inspector held meetings with the Principal, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions were held with groups of students.
- The inspector met with four members of the governing body, including representatives from the academy trust.
- Parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View were too few to scrutinise. The inspector considered the views of parents surveyed by the academy.
- The inspector considered the views of the 12 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire.
- Information about students' progress, behaviour and attendance was scrutinised, alongside records of teachers' performance management and professional development.
- The academy's improvement plans, self-evaluation records and the minutes of governing body meetings were evaluated.
- The inspector scrutinised the academy's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Compass School Southwark opened as an academy free school in September 2013. The academy is part of the Compass Schools Trust.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The academy's planned age range of students is 11–19. Currently, students have been admitted to Year 7 and Year 8.
- The academy is currently located in temporary accommodation while the construction of its own permanent accommodation takes place. It is expected the academy will move into its own buildings in September 2018.
- About three fifths of students at the academy are boys.
- The academy takes students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds including White British, Other White, Black African and Black Caribbean. A little under a half of students are of White British heritage. About one quarter of students speak English as an additional language.
- About three quarters of students at the academy are eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional funding to support students who receive free school meals and students who are looked after). This is much higher than seen nationally.
- About one fifth of students are disabled or have special educational needs. This is similar to the proportion seen nationally.
- The academy does not currently make use of any alternative provision for students.
- There is currently no published information about whether the academy meets the current government floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that students make consistently good progress in all subjects by ensuring:
 - better support in lessons for those students who are making the least progress, including boys, disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs
 - all students, including the most able, are challenged to deepen their understanding
 - teachers' written feedback is consistently good and used more effectively by students to make improvements to their work.
- Improve the behaviour of students so that it is typically good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers are able to deal with low-level disruption in lessons effectively
 - developing more effective strategies to help those students who struggle to manage their behaviour.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making better use of systems that track attendance, behaviour, achievement and the quality of teaching to ensure that plans have clearer targets for improvements and that regular, more focused checks can be made on the pace of improvement
 - strengthening the quality of middle leadership so that teachers are well guided about best practice in their subjects and held to account more.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The academy's drive for improvement was relaunched following the appointments of the current Principal and senior leaders during the last year. Leaders have established a shared understanding of their expectations of the academy's performance. However, despite their significant efforts, there is much still to do to ensure the school consistently offers good provision and outcomes for all students.
- Leaders and governors are clear that some middle leadership is not effective enough. This is because not all middle leaders live up to their responsibilities as leaders of subjects, modelling best practice and holding others to account. Middle leaders are beginning to be challenged to improve their practice.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching frequently and this has ensured some improvements. Leaders make use of a range of information to make judgements about the quality of teaching. However, leaders' checks on teaching are too often focused on the actions of the teacher and do not pay enough attention to its impact on students' learning. Leaders do not make enough use of their checks on teaching to hold teachers to account about key academy priorities, for example, supporting those students who are making the least progress.
- Leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans focus on the most important priorities. There are sound systems to identify the academy's strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in the improvements leaders have made to attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- Leaders' plans are not always specific enough about how much improvement should be expected or how quickly this should happen. Consequently, leaders occasionally describe incorrectly some improvements as good enough.
- Leaders' plans for the spending of pupil premium funding do not give enough detail about what success will look like. Consequently, although some impact is evident, it is not clear how well particular activities are having an impact on the achievement of specific students.
- Improving students' literacy has been a priority for leaders who have introduced a range of new approaches to support students this academic year. Training for teachers has been followed by checks to evaluate how well they are promoting literacy. This has led to improvements in the consistency with which teachers promote literacy.
- The academy's curriculum ensures students study a good range of subjects. Students develop other personal and social skills through compulsory after-school enrichment opportunities. Students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted well through 'Relating' lessons, assemblies and other opportunities. Leaders ensure that students explore and develop modern British values effectively through discussions about law, democracy and 'Britishness'.
- Leaders' vision and aspiration for students at the academy are clear. The academy's four core values of aspiration, integrity, exploration and resilience are used well to underpin students' academic and personal development. Leaders and teachers promote equality of opportunity by ensuring all students reflect on these values at appropriate times. Leaders' relentless efforts to secure full inclusion for students at the academy are beginning to improve outcomes for those students with the poorest attendance and behaviour.
- Senior leaders have improved processes to ensure support for students with special educational needs. These now involve students and parents much more. However, leaders have identified that more needs to be done to ensure that all teachers make full use of information about students with special educational needs so that more make good progress.
- Leaders are increasingly seizing opportunities to build up greater levels of trust and engagement with parents. Senior leaders lead by example with this priority and some staff support their expectations. However, not all learning family tutors demonstrate the same commitment in their responsibilities.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. Leaders have effective systems to ensure that all adults are safe to work with children. Child protection processes are well defined and understood by staff. Teachers' use of a 'nagging doubts' form to share concerns with leaders is very effective. Leaders show great determination in their expectations of other organisations that they provide the same standards of care for students at the academy.
- Leaders are making effective use of information about students' attainment to plan for the curriculum choices Year 8 students will make next academic year. At this stage, leaders are making good use of opportunities to promote students' aspiration through assemblies and talks.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and in most cases ensure that leaders are challenged about their work. They have a sound understanding of how leaders check the

quality of teaching and students' progress. Despite some involvement in observing how leaders evaluate the quality of teaching, governors accept that they have not challenged this area well enough in the past. Governors have made a specific appointment to fill this gap in expertise.

- There are good mechanisms to ensure that governors can measure the performance of most areas of the academy's work. Systems to evaluate the contribution and performance of teachers are used by governors when considering pay awards. Governors ensure the performance management of the Principal is rigorous and challenging.
- Governors ensure they are frequently informed about the work of leaders through regular reports from the Principal. They are able to challenge leaders appropriately about behaviour, attendance and the safety of students as a result.
- Governors have not challenged leaders effectively enough about their plans for the spending of the pupil premium funding. Governors have been too satisfied with leaders' work in this area because the progress of some disadvantaged students has improved.
- Academy trustees are all active members of the governing body. They fulfil their statutory duties as trustees efficiently alongside their responsibilities as governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. A minority of students do not display the positive attitudes to learning shown by the majority. A small proportion of students struggle to manage their behaviour in lessons and, occasionally, do very little or no work.
- Students' behaviour around school is variable. Most students conduct themselves well. This is evident when teachers are supervising them. At other times, for example, when students are moving between lessons, behaviour is not consistently good. This is reflected by students who say that a small number do not behave as well as others. While most students typically show respect for each other and the school environment, students indicate that a small number do not demonstrate this as consistently well as others.
- Students wear their uniform with pride. Most students show respect for each other and for the school environment.
- Academy behaviour records demonstrate leaders' commitment to achieving a consistent culture of good behaviour. The majority of parents feel that the school manages behaviour effectively. Leaders' zero tolerance of any forms of verbal or physical abuse between students has reduced the volume of behaviour incidents.
- Leaders have invested significant time and effort in focusing on the conduct of a small proportion of students who struggle to manage their own behaviour. The behaviour of these students is beginning to improve. However, a small minority are still at an early stage in managing their behaviour so that it is less disruptive.
- Students are mostly punctual to lessons. Occasionally, a small number arrive late to lessons because they have required advice and guidance about how to manage their behaviour. Leaders recognise this approach needs to be a short-term strategy so that in the longer term the learning of these students is not impeded any further.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students have a good knowledge of what to consider when keeping themselves and others safe, including e-safety, safety in public places and the safety of other students.
- Leaders have managed safety in the academy's temporary accommodation extremely well. They have ensured it is a safe place for students despite the ongoing challenges of building work in adjacent accommodation.
- Academy records confirm students' views that bullying is very uncommon. Students inform staff quickly when they are concerned about others' behaviour. Leaders take a very firm stance in such cases and, as a result, disagreements between students are resolved quickly. The academy's work in this area ensures that there are positive relationships between students from all ethnic backgrounds.
- The attendance of students is improving, but is slightly below the national average for secondary schools. The attendance of Year 7 students is much better than Year 8. Leaders are working to improve the low attendance of a small proportion of students who have joined the academy during the year.
- Leaders are working closely with the families of those students in Year 8 who are persistently absent.

They have put in place much tighter systems to tackle absence. Leaders are identifying more quickly the reasons why some students do not attend and work closely with other agencies to ensure that absent students are safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Although teaching ensures good progress for many students, not enough attention is paid to those students who are underperforming. This includes some boys, disadvantaged students and some students with special educational needs. Teachers' planning does not focus enough on the learning needs of these students and, as a result, some make too little progress.
- Teachers' assessment of students is accurate and some teachers are starting to develop strategies to meet the needs of different abilities. Students are sometimes encouraged to choose which level to work at based on their previous attainment. This is particularly effective for students with low starting points. However, teachers do not always check that students select the appropriate level of work when given the choice. Some students, including the most able, do not make the progress they should.
- Some teachers consider information about students' previous learning in their planning of what they should learn next. This is more successful in some subjects, for example in English. Most teachers identify what a student can do accurately but some teachers, particularly in mathematics, do not do enough to find out why a student has previously not understood something. This results in some students continuing to make the same errors when revisiting work from the past.
- Sometimes, teaching is too focused on the acquisition of skills and not enough on ensuring that students are gaining sufficient depth of understanding. For example, in mathematics, it is typical for students to work through too many different types of examples before getting the opportunity to apply their newly learnt skills to solve problems.
- Some teaching makes good use of opportunities to develop students' literacy. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, the teacher asked students to analyse a written passage and chaired a discussion effectively using their perceptions. Some teachers model and promote good literacy in their teaching where appropriate. Occasionally, teachers do not spot good opportunities to promote literacy in their subjects, for example, getting students to explain to others how to solve problems in mathematics.
- The quality of teachers' written feedback to students varies greatly. In some cases it focuses sharply on where the quality of work or presentation can be improved. However, some feedback does not set high enough expectations. Where teachers' written feedback is good, it has limited impact because not enough students respond to it.
- Where teaching has more of an impact on students' progress it is because teachers use their enthusiasm well to engage students with high quality questioning. This helps students develop their confidence in explaining their understanding and in debating points respectfully.
- Students rightly describe that 'they get on well with their teachers', but sometimes, this is impeded by behaviour that some teachers do not manage well. The approaches taken by some teachers and other adults ensure that the learning of others is not interrupted even if a student's behaviour falls below the standards expected.
- Not all teachers or other adults manage the poor behaviour of a few students well enough. Some teachers try to manage low-level disruption by ignoring it. Occasionally, these students take too long to regain good attitudes to learning. Too often, this has a negative impact on the learning and progress of those students.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The majority of students join the academy with average starting points and many make at least good progress. However, some students make too little progress. This is particularly the case in Year 7.
- Students' progress across subjects is variable. For example, some students make good progress in English and French, but much less in geography and science.
- Girls make good or better progress in most subjects because they have consistently good attitudes to learning. However, the proportion of boys that are making good progress is not as strong.
- There are little or no gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and that of others in Year 8. In Year 7, disadvantaged students make similar progress to others in English, but not enough are making the progress they should in some other subjects. Less than two thirds of disadvantaged students in Year 7 are making expected progress in mathematics, and only a half are making expected progress in

science. These fall well below the rates of progress for other students in the school. On average, disadvantaged students in Year 7 are about two terms behind others in English and about three terms behind others in mathematics.

- The proportion of students with special educational needs who are making expected progress is too low in Year 7. In mathematics and science, less than half of these students are making the progress that leaders expect of them.
- About one in six students join the academy with high levels of attainment. These students do not always make the progress they should. Although the proportion of the most able students making expected progress is beginning to increase in some subjects, it is not increasing fast enough and is too inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- Students who joined the academy with low levels of attainment make good progress in all subjects. Leaders make effective use of funding to help these students catch up. The proportion of these students making expected progress consistently exceeds others in the same year groups.
- The progress of students from different heritages is carefully tracked to ensure equality of opportunity. There are no gaps in the progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds. Students who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to or exceed the progress of others at the academy.
- Standards of students' literacy are beginning to improve as a result of leaders' actions. Students' reading ages and reading habits are showing modest signs of improvement. Rates of progress in English are typically stronger than other subjects. Leaders are rightly focusing on ensuring that all students continue to improve their use of language and grammar in other subjects.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139587
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	450101

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Leon de Costa
Principal	Ms Lauren Thorpe
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 3542 6506
Email address	info@compass-schools.com

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