

Compass Primary Academy

Windmill Avenue, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 7EA

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not checked that the impact of their initiatives is consistent. The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are inconsistent.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance have not ensured that the pupil premium has the maximum impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not sharply focused.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are not as effective as they could be in holding staff to account.
- Teachers do not have equally high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Too often, lessons are not sufficiently focused or challenging. Teachers are not equally skilled in matching work well to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The teaching of problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics is inconsistent. Too many pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Leaders are establishing a culture of higher expectations.
- Leaders' and other staff's commitment to the well-being and personal development of pupils is unwavering. Relationships are positive. There is an ethos of mutual respect and care.
- Children make a good start to their schooling in the early years. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils behave well at all times. They are polite and courteous.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Pupils make good progress in acquiring early reading skills.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - they check that their work to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards is having a consistently positive impact throughout the school
 - their plans for improvement, including for the use of the pupil premium, are sharply focused and enable them to hold staff more effectively to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - those responsible for governance more effectively hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make.

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of all pupils and challenge them to make the progress of which they are capable, including those who are capable of reaching the higher standards
 - plan lessons that focus on what they want pupils to learn and match work well to pupils' abilities
 - have high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their progress in writing
 - teach pupils the understanding they need to develop their reasoning skills and be effective problem-solvers in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders are bringing about many improvements to the school and standards are improving. Leaders have a secure overview of the quality of teaching and learning. They accurately analyse strengths and weaknesses. They work alongside teachers, and provide support to help teachers improve the quality of their work. However, leaders do not check carefully enough, and ensure that their strategies are applied consistently well. The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are inconsistent and this weakens pupils' progress in some classes.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not focus on the priorities they wish to improve. They do not make clear the changes that they, and those responsible for governance, wish to see. They are not focused sharply enough on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium is not sufficiently focused. While a wider range of interventions and initiatives are now taking place, leaders have not ensured that these are having a consistently positive impact. Those responsible for governance cannot be sure the funding is having the maximum impact. Leaders recognise this and plan to complete an external review of how this funding is used.
- Senior leaders are strengthening and developing the effectiveness of middle leadership roles. Middle leaders who are newer to their roles are enthusiastic and are being supported to develop their expertise. However, actions to bring about improvement are often not linked as well as they could be to improving the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils.
- The trust has helped to establish the increasingly cohesive senior leadership team. It is supporting improvements to the quality of leadership, teaching and the curriculum. However, it has not been as effective as it could be in holding leaders to account to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is put into place. Leaders have a sharp overview and check pupils' progress carefully. Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their different starting points.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is also used well. Leaders have set precise targets which focus on raising levels of engagement and participation for all. Leaders regularly review the impact of their work. As a result of the work undertaken, participation and engagement levels have risen in pupils' physical activity and involvement in sporting events. A specific focus has been given to the engagement of pupils with SEND, and their opportunities have been increased significantly.
- Leaders ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. The promotion of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Leaders describe this as 'the thread that binds everything together'. They have put into place a well-thought-out programme and curriculum to ensure that these aspects are strong.

- Leaders are effective in bringing about improvements in the areas on which they sharply focus. They are establishing a culture of higher expectations. While still too inconsistent, the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are improving. Leaders have been particularly effective in improving pupils' well-being, attendance and standards of behaviour, and the teaching of phonics.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke with the inspectors, said their children are well looked after, enjoy school and are making progress.

Governance of the school

- Those responsible for governance are not stringent in holding leaders to account for the use and impact of the pupil premium. An external review of the pupil premium spending is not recommended as leaders are taking appropriate steps to address this.
- The governing body is committed to improving its own effectiveness and has recently undertaken a review of its work. Those responsible for governance recognise that school plans for improvement do not enable them to be as effective as they could be in holding leaders to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- The governing body has a broad overview of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. Governors have a range of relevant expertise. They have a good understanding of pupils' different backgrounds and this informs their work. Governors visit the school and meet with leaders and other staff to review standards and check other aspects of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils say they are safe, and the very large majority of parents said their children are safe. There is a culture of care that is evident in pupils of all ages and is supported by the positive role models provided by leaders and staff.
- Those responsible for governance are effective in checking that the school meets all its safeguarding responsibilities.
- Staff receive training to ensure that they are kept up to date with current initiatives. This includes, for example, the government's 'Prevent' duty and the dangers of gang culture. Staff understand fully the procedures for reporting any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare.
- Leaders keep well-organised and detailed records of concerns that are raised, and the actions they take. Their records show that they respond promptly and are tenacious in involving external agencies where this is relevant.
- Bullying is very rare. Almost all pupils and the large majority of parents are confident that staff will resolve any concerns raised. Some parents did raise some concerns, but the inspectors could find no evidence that the school did not take effective actions.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teachers do not have equally high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Too often, teaching and the activities set for pupils are not well matched to the knowledge and skills pupils are intended to gain. Teachers are not equally adept at identifying the next steps in pupils' learning, and ensuring that skills are consolidated.
- Too often, teachers do not match work well to the abilities of different pupils. As a result, over time, the progress of too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is not as strong as it could be.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers are often effective in teaching mental arithmetic and written calculation skills. However, pupils in some year groups have insufficient opportunities to develop their reasoning skills and solve problems. In some classes, pupils complete little of this work to gain deeper understanding.
- Teachers in all classes teach pupils how to edit and improve their own writing, and offer pupils guidance to help them improve the quality of their work. Again, however, the effectiveness of teaching is inconsistent in different classes and subjects. In some classes, for example, pupils make repeated errors over time and this slows their progress.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading in the early years and key stage 1 is effective. Teaching is brisk and focused, and staff use a consistent approach. Staff are effective in making links between reading, writing and handwriting. They often check the meanings of words to promote pupils' language development. However, teachers' promotion of pupils' inference and deduction skills, and understanding of vocabulary, is variable in other parts of the school.
- Teaching assistants are generally used well to support the learning of pupils. However, this is also variable. Sometimes they are not given clear guidance to help them support pupils to make stronger progress.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They apply themselves to all that is asked of them. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage and praise pupils' best efforts. The school environment celebrates pupils' best work such as the 'Writing Royalty' books of pupils' writing.
- Teachers are often enthusiastic and have secure subject knowledge. Teachers' questioning is often strong, and they expect pupils to answer in 'full sentences'. For example, a teacher was observed questioning pupils to encourage them to explain their thinking about what they would write. This enabled pupils to offer higher-quality contributions and led to them writing more complex sentences.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders and other staff are effective in developing pupils' well-being. Support is

provided to help pupils understand emotions. Pupils always have someone to talk to if something is worrying them.

- Relationships are very positive. Staff ensure that there is an ethos of care and mutual respect. Many parents commented on their children's improved confidence. A typical comment was: 'My son was shy and lacked confidence when he started school last year. I am over the moon with the improvement and the support the teachers and staff have given him.'
- Pupils know what bullying means and understand different types of bullying. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including through the weekly 'how to keep safe' assemblies. This includes when they are online, in relation to talking to strangers, or water and fire safety.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their smart uniforms. They are taught to take increasing pride in their work.
- Pupils greatly value the roles and responsibilities the school offers. These include the sports captains, digital leaders and junior librarians. Pupils can also become community, environment, well-being, lunchtime or teaching and learning ambassadors. Pupils have a say in how the school runs. The environment ambassadors, for example, visited classrooms with a vice-principal and said they thought some key equipment should be available to help pupils' learning. Classes now have 'support stations' for pupils to use. Pupils also run a healthy tuck shop at playtimes and the community ambassadors organise fundraising activities.
- Staff encourage pupils to be aspirational and enterprising. For instance, a trust-wide enterprise project encourages pupils to come up with a 'big idea' which they then present. This was observed in a lesson where pupils were designing advertising leaflets for such ideas as a 'snack sofa' or 'pollution sucker'. Pupils are encouraged to think of their lives beyond school.
- Pupils are aware of the importance of making healthy choices. Illustrating this, pupils in Year 6 said that, 'Learning about circulation and digestion helped me realise what's going on inside my body. So you make sure everything's running smoothly and you're healthy.'
- Pupils have a very well-developed sense of what is right and wrong, and the importance of respecting others. A typical comment was: 'All of us respect each other in our school.' However, some older pupils are not as secure in their understanding of democracy or the rule of law as they should be for their age.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff ensure that the school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils themselves say behaviour 'has improved 100%', compared to behaviour in the past. Pupils say they enjoy school and learning, and like their teachers.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently well and school systems are understood by pupils. Disruption in classrooms is rare. Pupils only lose focus or concentration when work is not matched well to their abilities or needs, or they are not clear about a task.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result of leaders' actions, attendance is improving.

Overall attendance is currently above the national average. Persistent absence, including that of disadvantaged pupils, has reduced considerably compared to the previous year. Leaders check attendance carefully. They strongly emphasise to parents the importance of attendance, and work closely with and support families whose children have persistent absence.

- Pupils conduct themselves well at all times of the school day. Pupils are friendly and polite, and have very good manners. Even the very youngest children held doors open for adults, for example.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, standards overall improved compared to the previous year. Children leave the early years with levels of development that are similar to those seen nationally. In key stage 1, pupils' attainment of the expected standards was similar to the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils left key stage 2, progress in writing and mathematics was average. However, progress in reading has been below the national averages for the last two years. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 was below the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Current pupils' work, observations of teaching, and school information show that while improving, pupils' progress and attainment are too inconsistent. Overall, too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.
- Over the last two years, too few pupils, especially among those who are disadvantaged, have attained high standards; this is also the case for current pupils. This is because teaching does not offer sufficient challenge to the more able pupils.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average. However, pupils now make good progress in phonics and read confidently. They are taught to say and read sounds, and blend them to read words. They are able to apply their phonics skills in their writing. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading. However, pupils' acquisition of reading and comprehension skills and their understanding of important vocabulary are inconsistent.
- Pupils often make strong progress in learning calculation skills in mathematics. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities in some classes to reason mathematically and solve problems, and this slows their progress.
- Many pupils are able to write at length in different subjects, in a range of styles. However, teachers' expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation, as well as of handwriting and presentation, vary in different classes and subjects. This has a negative impact on the overall quality of pupils' writing and the progress they make.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a strong start to their education in the early years. Many children join with skills below those expected for their age. In 2018, the proportion of children who

achieved a good level of development by the end of the early years was similar to the national average. This was an improvement on the previous year. Children make good progress from their different starting points and the majority are well prepared for Year 1.

- Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve in the early years. Staff ensure that children who join the Nursery class learn to hear and say sounds clearly. This helps children to acquire speech and language skills well. In the Reception class, children were observed confidently and independently writing sentences linked to the class book, 'Aliens Love Underpants'. The teaching of phonics is highly effective in the early years.
- Staff establish clear routines and expectations for behaviour that promote children's learning and development. Children are inquisitive learners who are keen to talk about their work. Children show high levels of independence and behave well. Children are confident and have positive attitudes to learning. Children were observed, for example, discussing enthusiastically how they would go about trapping aliens, or solving problems when sorting a set of objects.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders have a clear vision and understanding of early years practice. Leaders analyse information about children's learning, progress and development carefully. They identify areas that are weaker for children entering the school, and make adjustments to teaching and the curriculum to address these. For example, the Nursery has placed emphasis on developing children's language skills. Opportunities for the development of fine motor skills and early mark-making are plentiful and children engage with these.
- Leaders deploy adults well to support children of different abilities, developmental stages or needs.
- Leaders are increasingly engaging with and working in partnership with parents. Leaders offer information workshops and parents contribute to assessments of their children's learning. Parents value the work the school does to provide them with ideas for supporting learning at home.
- Leaders ensure that all the early years welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	143025
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10087327

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Andrew Campbell
Principal	Jo Fallowell
Telephone number	01536 532 707
Website	www.compassprimary.org
Email address	office@compassprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Compass Primary Academy is part of the Brooke Weston Trust. The trust delegates responsibilities to a local governing body. The chair of the governing body is a member of the board of trustees.
- Compass Primary Academy is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above that seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the principal, the assistant and vice principals, middle leaders and other staff. The inspectors also met with members of the governing body and an executive principal of the Brooke Weston Trust.
- The inspectors visited 32 lessons, the majority jointly with senior leaders. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with leaders, met with groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Account was taken of the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text responses. There were 11 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 52 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documents were scrutinised. These included those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' attainment and progress. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Edmonds	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Stirland	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019