

Inspection of Compton Dundon School

School Lane, Compton Dundon, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TE

Inspection dates: 3–5 December 2019

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?

This is a small school that has only been operating for a year. Staff are enthusiastic and caring. They know the pupils well and they understand their individual needs. Consequently, pupils feel safe and looked after well.

Every pupil is made to feel welcome. The majority of pupils have had negative experiences of education in the past. The headteacher understands this. He is good at encouraging pupils to feel included. This gives pupils hope for the future and a reason to smile.

Pupils' behaviour is carefully monitored by teachers and teaching assistants through the day. Pupils learn how to relate to each other and to staff. All pupils are expected to be kind. They are taught about the negative consequences of bullying. Staff are particularly good at helping pupils deal with moments of stress or anxiety.

The school is set in a peaceful location. This helps pupils to feel calm. All teaching takes place in small groups with specially trained staff. This contributes to the positive atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are keen to attend this school.

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

The curriculum is well structured. Some subjects, such as English and mathematics, are taught separately and others are taught within projects. Teachers plan lessons well to meet pupils' individual needs.

Many pupils have been out of education for a considerable period of time before joining the school. Senior leaders' flexible approach to the curriculum encourages pupils to get back into formal education. As a result, pupils attend school regularly. Senior leaders are ambitious for pupils to return to mainstream education. Staff share this vision.

Senior leaders have successfully established a system for assessing pupils' learning. This does not overburden teachers with paperwork. Even so, it is a relatively new system that still requires some fine tuning.

The great majority of pupils who join the school struggle with reading. Senior leaders strive to develop pupils' literacy skills. They have been largely successful. Inspectors saw pupils composing poetry and enjoying reading their work to each other. By helping pupils to catch up with their reading and writing, teachers have improved pupils' self-esteem and confidence. However, even though their literacy skills have improved, pupils are not yet choosing to read books for pleasure.

Teachers regularly share good ideas for teaching particular topics. However, they are not always clear whose job it is to gather these ideas together and so develop the curriculum in specific subjects.

The school's mission is centred on helping pupils to develop social skills and so moderate their behaviour. The headteacher is passionate about helping pupils to overcome their behavioural difficulties. He has designed a behaviour management system that is based on reward tokens. Pupils respond well to this system. It helps them to deal with moments of raised anxiety and to remain calm.

Staff are good at helping pupils develop their personal skills. This is a strength of the school. Staff exude confidence. As a result, pupils are reassured about the present and given hope for the future. Teachers provide a wide range of experiences that pupils would not otherwise encounter. For example, international studies lessons give pupils insight into different cultures.

The directors of the proprietorial body work closely with local authorities in the region to provide places for pupils from a variety of backgrounds. They have expertise in supporting pupils with autism spectrum disorder and pupils with social and emotional needs. Consequently, they are adept at meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Since opening, the school has expanded rapidly. However, since September, the number of pupils on roll has stabilised. Procedures for the day-to-day running of the school are now well established and effective. For example, when pupils are dropped off at school and go home in taxis, the system for keeping them safe operates like clockwork.

The directors of the proprietorial body hold senior leaders to account for the performance of the school well. They have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards. The school complies with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Although this is a new school, senior leaders have already made good links with the local community. As a result, pupils are now able to enjoy physical education lessons at a local community centre. Several pupils said they really enjoy playing active games there.

Parents and carers support the school. They are pleased with the quality of education their children experience. One parent echoed many by commenting, 'Since starting at Compton Dundon, my son's abilities in social skills, behaviour, speech and general understanding has come on leaps and bounds.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has established a safe environment for pupils. He makes sure that all staff are well trained and alert to pupils' vulnerabilities. He leads this area of the school's work determinedly. He sets a good example to all and this has led to an open culture of safeguarding at the school.

By helping pupils to better understand their emotions, teachers improve pupils' ability to deal with risky situations. Staff recognise that pupils are particularly at risk when they are online. The curriculum covers this aspect of safeguarding comprehensively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Staff understand the system for assessing pupils' academic work. However, there are still variations in its use across the school. As a result, there is variation in the accuracy of the information that senior leaders receive. Senior leaders should make sure that staff apply the assessment system consistently across classes so that they can be sure that it is providing valid information.
- Most pupils' literacy skills are very weak when they join the school. Many pupils are not used to reading and as a result they shy away from starting new books. Senior leaders need to further develop the successful work that has already started and so encourage more pupils to read books for pleasure.
- The senior leadership team holds overall responsibility for curriculum design. However, teachers are unclear about who leads the curriculum in each subject. This lack of clarity means that new ideas are not spread between teachers efficiently. The school should identify curriculum leadership roles more clearly and so ensure that new teaching approaches are communicated across the school more effectively.

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're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	146335
DfE registration number	933/6010
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10086585
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Propel Education Ltd
Chair	Jonathan Lloyd
Headteacher	Roy Grimes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000
Telephone number	01458 555920
Website	www.comptondundonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in January 2019 on the site of a former village school in Compton Dundon.
- The proprietorial body, Propel Education Ltd, has two directors. Both directors were closely involved in setting up the school.
- The current headteacher was appointed in July 2019. Several staff have been appointed since then as the school has expanded.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs and pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by three local authorities. These are Somerset,

Bath and North East Somerset, and North Somerset.

- The school uses one alternative provider of education, Otterhead Forest School.

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, members of the senior leadership team and with the two directors of Propel Education Ltd. We also met with teachers and teaching assistants.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, reading, history and personal and social education. In each of these subjects, we met with teachers, considered curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and considered pupils' written work.
- We scrutinised the school's policies relating to safeguarding, spoke with the designated safeguarding leader and considered records of the pre-employment suitability checks the school makes on its staff. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authorities that commission places for pupils at the school.
- We considered parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. We also considered the comments of parents, pupils and staff in other surveys carried out by the school.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Non Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019