

# Compass Community School Hampshire

**Inspection dates**

12 February 2020

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens**

## **Main inspection findings**

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4*

- The school proposes to provide education for a very small number of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are likely to arrive at the school at any time within their secondary education, with varying degrees of academic success and previous trauma. Leaders propose that the school will work alongside other professionals to provide pupils with the education and therapy they need.
- Leaders anticipate that the population will be transient. Pupils will usually attend between 18 months and two years, linked with their therapeutic programmes.
- The proposed school will be another of a growing number of similar very small schools overseen by Compass Community Ltd. There is an executive headteacher for all of the schools nationally and a regional headteacher. A lead teacher, not yet appointed, will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.
- Leaders are ambitious and clear in what they hope to achieve during pupils' anticipated relatively short stays. There is a clear focus on preparing pupils for their immediate and longer term futures. Leaders intend to ensure each pupil's curriculum is designed and adapted to meet their particular needs without losing sight of underpinning principles such as 'breadth' and 'aspiration'.
- The curriculum policy recognises how flexible the curriculum will need to be in the context of the proposed school. It commits to addressing pupils' needs 'creatively and on a bespoke basis to ensure that all students are studying at an appropriate level with high levels of engagement'. Despite the individualised nature and flexibility likely to be required, and alluded to here, the policy sets out important underpinning principles to guide curriculum decisions. These principles include the importance of 'relevance', 'breadth', 'continuity' and 'progression'.
- To support teachers, leaders have provided a suite of schemes of work for all ages. These resources cover a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, art, computing, history, geography, religious education, design technology

and physical education (PE). The intention is that these plans and associated resources will be interpreted for individual pupils according to their special educational needs and/or disabilities or other needs.

- A scheme of work to support the teaching of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is in place. These plans draw largely on widely recognised materials intended for this purpose. As with other aspects of the curriculum, leaders emphasise that PSHCE will be flexed to meet the presenting needs of pupils. Curriculum content that promotes British values transcends different elements of the programme, for example through sessions about citizenship, decision-making and democracy.
- The school will make use of a careers adviser who works across all the Compass schools. The aim of this approach will be to get to know and understand each individual pupil and work closely with them according to their needs and circumstances. Leaders are keen to ensure that the advice and guidance offered to pupils is meaningful. They convey a firm understanding of how to achieve this. It is likely that this advice will meet the requirements of being impartial.
- Due to the anticipated complexity of the kind of pupils for whom the school will provide education, leaders firmly believe that they should be taught by qualified teachers. Leaders intend to appoint teaching staff accordingly, balancing complementary specialist areas. In addition, leaders aim to maximise the potential benefits of sharing expertise across the network of schools. For instance, they intend to draw on subject specialisms across different schools to plan or advise on the curriculum content in particular subjects. Leaders have planned a schedule of monitoring as part of their work to assure the quality of teaching.
- Leaders' plans for assessing pupils' progress are well conceived and likely to meet requirements. As new pupils start, leaders propose to undertake baseline assessments of pupils' attainment and promptly identify gaps in their understanding. From there, the school's 'progress trackers' are intended to chart pupils' progress across the curriculum.
- Highly relevant in this context, the school also aims to assess pupils' social and emotional well-being, with a view to monitoring improvements in pupils' personal development. Leaders' proposals for how they will do this are plausible. Leaders intend to report relevant information on individuals to parents and other relevant parties at least termly, which exceeds statutory requirements.
- As far as it is possible to determine, without meeting the yet-to-be-appointed lead teacher and other education staff, the standards contained within this part are likely to be met.

## Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

### *Paragraph 5*

- A wide range of the school's plans and policies set out a clear commitment to ensure that the school's approaches, curriculum and teaching are consistent with the promotion of fundamental British values. Leaders have considered how each value will be explicitly taught through the curriculum, as well as implicitly reinforced through broader policies and approaches.

- Leaders have considered carefully how the school will promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, plans are in place for mid-week celebration assemblies which focus on how well pupils have done against their self-set targets. Other proposed strategies include work to improve pupils' self-esteem, engaging pupils in current affairs, learning about aspirational people, past and present, and using literature to introduce pupils to a world beyond their immediate environment. Leaders have thought carefully about sourcing and selecting texts that balance the required content with the potentially low literacy levels of some pupils.
- To enhance the class-based curriculum, leaders plan to take pupils on trips to broaden their experiences, for example to castles, the theatre or different places of worship.
- Teaching about the protected characteristics is threaded through the school's policies and proposals. It is both explicit and implicit in the plans and schemes of work.
- If leaders implement their plans effectively, the standard in this part is likely to be met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7*

- The safeguarding policy makes specific reference to relevant statutory guidance. It identifies clearly where the designated responsibility for safeguarding within the school will lie. Leaders already in post have the required training to take on the role of designated safeguarding lead. The plan is to train the new lead teacher to assume this role, with the executive and regional headteachers acting as deputies.
- The policy's overarching statement shows insightful awareness of the proposed school's context and the particular vulnerability of the pupils who will attend. The detail of the policy conveys a reassuring awareness of the breadth of factors that contribute to effective safeguarding of pupils. The policy recognises the additional barriers that can prevent some pupils from being safeguarded effectively and sets out the implications for the school's practice.
- The headteachers offer a convincing explanation of the sort of safeguarding culture they wish to create and how they will achieve this. A tight focus on compliance is rightly supplemented by a clear desire to go much further. Leaders aim to establish an environment where staff act appropriately on 'safeguarding niggles' before they become a 'concern'. There is a strong sense that safeguarding will be 'front and centre' of everything.

#### *Paragraphs 9 and 10*

- Pupils who attend this school are likely to have experienced multiple placement breakdowns. Leaders are acutely aware that, as a result, pupils may have difficulty trusting adults and forming positive relationships with their peers. Consequently, the starting point of policies, about matters such as behaviour and bullying, is the aim to make pupils' experience of school as positive as possible.
- The proposed behaviour policy places a suitable focus on the importance of learning, not just the management of behaviour. The policy makes provision for a reasonable reward and sanction system. Leaders can describe in convincing detail how they intend to work consistently within the tight structure of the policy because this has

been designed in such a way as to be responsive to pupils' needs and the school's context.

- The 'counter bullying' policy is again grounded strongly in the context in which the proposed school will operate. The school's chosen definition of bullying: 'deliberately hurtful behaviour in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves' is likely to be helpful in enabling a wide range of relevant behaviour to be considered against these procedures.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16*

- There is a suitable overarching health and safety policy in place that allocates clear responsibility and accountability for this important work. Similarly, the policies and proposed arrangements for first aid and the supervision of pupils are likely to be adequate. Leaders plan to train all staff and, indeed, pupils in first aid techniques.
- A fire risk assessment of the premises has been carried out by an external specialist. It identifies the school's overall risk level within an acceptable range.
- Arrangements for registering admissions and attendance are in place and are likely to meet requirements if diligently maintained.
- The risk assessment policy provides a format for the systematic assessment of potential risks. It sets out specific protocols of proactively looking for potential hazards, deciding who might be harmed and how, and evaluating whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more needs to be done. The proposed review of the effectiveness of the action taken closes the cycle. The policy makes clear that risk assessment is an 'ongoing process' that should also be formally recorded.
- If the proposed policies and procedures are implemented effectively, the requirements of the paragraphs within this part are likely to be met.

**Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

*Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21*

- A single central record is already in place. It allows for all the required information about the suitability of the staff, governors and proprietor to be recorded. Provision has also been made to ensure that supplementary checks are carried out, such as obtaining references and confirming a person's medical fitness.
- The proprietor's 'human resources' department will carry out all relevant checks. However, school leaders have sufficient knowledge and understanding to oversee that the correct checks are completed.
- The school does not intend to use supply staff or volunteers.
- The standards contained within this part are likely to be met.

**Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

*Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 31*

- The school itself is in a standalone single-story building. It has an entrance hall, a single toilet for pupils with integral washing facility, an office and two small classrooms. Leaders plan to accommodate a maximum of three pupils in each

classroom. The school will also benefit from staff access to a kitchen and dedicated staff toilets in a nearby building.

- The office has an integral washing facility and is close to the pupils' toilet. It will thus meet requirements as the room earmarked for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils, as necessary.
- Staff will provide pupils with fresh drinking water obtained from the on-site kitchen. The hot water supply for the toilet handbasin is thermostatically controlled.
- The buildings are warm, clean, professionally finished and freshly decorated. There are unlikely to be any issues with light or sound.
- There is sufficient outside space for recreation, including an area with an all-weather surface. Leaders plan to take pupils off-site for PE.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

##### *Paragraph 32*

- The school does not yet have a live website. However, all the required information and policies are readily available on request, including a detailed safeguarding policy.
- Leaders are well informed about other information that they must provide once the school is operating, for example information to support the annual review of pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- This standard is likely to be met.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

##### *Paragraph 33*

- The school's written complaints policy is available on request. It adheres closely to the requirements of the independent school standards. For instance, the policy explains that complaints can be raised and considered informally in the first instance. The policy goes on to outline the required arrangements to escalate the complaint through a formal procedure should the matter be unresolved.
- The standard contained within this paragraph is likely to be met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

##### *Paragraph 34*

- This is an experienced proprietor with a rapidly growing track record of successful school inspection outcomes for its schools.
- The executive and regional headteachers are experienced leaders. They have worked in this way in very similar schools. Both have been with Compass for approximately five years.
- Leaders at different levels are knowledgeable about the requirements of running an independent school. They were well prepared for this inspection. Going forward, there are clear systems in place to check that the independent school standards are continually met.

- Leaders propose to maximise the potential benefits offered from being part of a network of schools. For example, they plan to share expertise to offer training and curriculum guidance and support across the different sites. Although not grouped geographically, leaders reasonably believe that technology will make this possible.
- Initially, the regional headteacher intends to keep particularly close oversight of the school, gradually handing over greater independence to the lead teacher.
- There is an established governing body for all the Compass schools which meets regularly. Governors bring a diverse range of specialist expertise. This will provide an additional layer to the clear leadership structure. Such governance is likely to bring constructive support and challenge for leaders, aimed at ensuring the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders anticipate working closely with other professionals for the well-being of pupils and to meet their complex needs. The regional headteacher is a qualified special educational needs coordinator and will act in this capacity for the school.
- If leaders implement their proposed plans and policies consistently and effectively, this standard is likely to be met.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proprietor has ensured the school's equalities policy sets out clearly its commitment to promoting equality through taking deliberate action to improve access to the curriculum, information and the physical environment. Leaders have written an initial plan for the first year to cover the establishment of the school, which they intend to subsequently supplement with a two-year rolling plan.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

## Proposed school details

Unique reference number	147615
DfE registration number	850/6096
Inspection number	10129667

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Compass Community Ltd
Chair	Bernadine Gibson
Headteacher	Rebecca Slayford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	07753 584 581
Website	None
Email address	rebecca.slayford@compasscommunity.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected



## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>	<b>Inspector's recommendation</b>
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	11–17	11–17
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	6	6

## Pupils

	<b>School's current position</b>	<b>School's proposal</b>
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Boys
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	6
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	6
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	6
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	6

## Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	2
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0

## Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school will occupy a single-storey converted garage, located on a rural site. The school will benefit from access to some facilities in the adjacent building, which is also occupied by the proprietor.
- The school will provide education for children looked after with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is anticipated that most pupils will have an EHC plan. The school intends to cater for the following types of need:
  - behavioural, emotional and social development needs or difficulties
  - cognitive and learning needs.
- The named headteacher, Rebecca Slayford, is the executive headteacher responsible for all Compass schools nationally. There will also be a regional headteacher, Kit Hobbs, for this and other schools in the south.

## Information about this inspection

- The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, if the DfE decides to register it. It was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector held extensive discussions with the executive headteacher and regional headteacher. He also spoke by telephone with the chief executive officer of Compass Community Ltd as chair, and the chair of the governing body.
- The headteachers took the inspector on a tour of the premises and accommodation proposed to house the school. He scrutinised a wide range of plans, policies and documents relating to the independent school standards and other statutory requirements.

## Inspection team

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Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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