

Inspection of Compass Community School Victoria Park

Victoria Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 8SB

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 September 2021

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?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most pupils attend well. This is significant, given that many had low attendance in their previous educational setting. Pupils are settled and happy. Teachers, therapists and support staff provide the nurture and help that pupils need.

Prior to starting at the school, many pupils have missed a lot of formal education. Leaders do not let this hold pupils back. Leaders believe that in the right environment, with the right approach and support, every child can experience success. The school's ethos of 'motivate, educate, inspire' is evident in the day-to-day life of the school. Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils to be the best that they can be. Most pupils engage well with their work. However, leaders need to make sure that work set by teachers is right for all pupils.

Behaviour is positive. Although pupils and parents say there are times when this is not always the case. A few pupils have experienced bullying, but they say staff resolve issues quickly when they happen. Pupils told inspectors that there is always someone to talk to. Positive relationships exist across the school.

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

Leaders and staff want the best for pupils. The curriculum is broad and ambitious with aspiring end points, including GCSEs. Specialist teachers plan the curriculum and subject content and support staff who teach lessons outside their own subject area. Teachers use curriculum plans to help them decide what to teach and when to teach it. Some lesson content is repeated, based on the individual starting points of the pupils. Where this is done well, the curriculum is carefully planned to build on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning and use this to plan next steps. Pupils' work shows they are learning more and remembering more. Pupils use their prior knowledge effectively in order to tackle more difficult tasks. The quality of pupils' writing and use of language develop well over time.

In some subjects, the level of challenge in the work set by teachers does not match pupils' needs. In these instances, pupils find the work too easy. At times, this leads to some pupils becoming distracted and losing focus. This is also the case where pupils demonstrate a natural flair in these subjects.

Staff recognise that many pupils are in the early stages of reading and have gaps in their phonics knowledge. As a result, a structured phonics scheme is in place for those who need it. The phonics programme is well planned and supports the teaching of reading well. Pupils largely enjoy reading. However, older pupils do not show the same enthusiasm or love of reading as the younger pupils in the school.

Staff know their pupils well. They pick up on pupils' interests and hobbies and use these to build positive relationships. Many pupils in the school have education,

health and care (EHC) plans, and all pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use the EHC plans well to assist with their planning and delivery of lessons.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is impressive. Staff support pupils well through work around holistic development, for example helping pupils to develop social relationships and grow in confidence. Pupils learn to show respect for others who have different views and beliefs to their own. The school has made links with several alternative providers. These provide opportunities for pupils to study courses in construction, mechanics and farm work. Leaders carry out relevant checks on the external provision. Pupils who access these organisations attend well and make gains in their learning. The sharp focus on careers education, information, advice and guidance means pupils are well prepared for their future choices.

Staff implement the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Leaders and staff maintain comprehensive behaviour records. Cases are taken seriously and resolved swiftly. A small proportion of parents say there are occasional behavioural issues. However, they are confident that staff deal with these quickly and effectively. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive overall. A few pupils struggle to sustain focus and become disengaged when the work is not well matched to their needs. This results in pupils not completing their work.

Those responsible for governance are experienced and meet all of their statutory requirements. This includes compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, which is outlined in a detailed accessibility plan. Governors hold leaders to account in all aspects of the school's work. They provide challenge to leaders and monitor aspects of the school's work. As a result, all of the independent school standards are met. There is a strong focus on staff well-being and workload, which staff appreciate greatly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is the school's top priority. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and reflects the latest government guidance. Leaders make the policy available on the school's website and as a paper copy. Systems for reporting concerns are clear and understood by all. Designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Staff follow up any concerns with tenacity. All staff know about a range of safeguarding risks, including radicalisation and exploitation. Staff are quick to spot and act on changes in a pupil's behaviour that could indicate risk. Nothing is left to chance where the safety of pupils is concerned.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the work set by teachers is not well matched to the needs of pupils. In these instances, the work is not challenging enough, and pupils find it too easy. This reduces engagement and limits pupils' learning. Leaders need to make sure that teachers provide pupils with work that is suitably demanding and challenging.
- Younger pupils enjoy reading and are developing a love of books. However, older pupils' attitudes to reading are not as positive. Leaders need to make sure reading is consistently prioritised throughout all year groups so that pupils continue to develop a love of reading.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	148064
DfE registration number	333/6017
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10192410
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Bernadine Gibson
Chair	Kate East
Headteacher	Jade Gilchrist
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	0121 827 7861
Website	www.compass-schools.org
Email address	victoria.park@compass-schools.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Compass Community School Victoria Park is a small, independent day school in Tipton. It is part of the Compass Community Group. The school offers places for up to 30 pupils between the ages of six and 17. Pupils who attend have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. At the time of this inspection, there were no pupils above the age of 16 on roll at the school.
- This is the school's first full standard inspection. The school was registered by the DfE in November 2020. Several local authorities, including Sandwell, Dudley, and Staffordshire commission places at the school. The majority of pupils have EHC plans. Pupils can join the school at any point during the academic year.
- The school makes use of registered alternative provision provided by Black Country Wheels. Ofsted separately inspects this provider. Two unregistered training providers are also used by the school.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 inspection team discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and took this into account during the inspection.
- The inspection followed the deep dive methodology. This involved meeting subject leaders, visits to lessons, reviewing work in books and talking with pupils about their educational experiences. Deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and economic education.
- The inspection team met with the head of school and the regional executive headteacher. The lead inspector met with the proprietor and the director of education. Meetings were held with the regional special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors met with pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector completed a tour of the premises to check their suitability.
- Several key policies and documents were scrutinised. These included the school's attendance and admissions registers, the single central record, pupils' behaviour records and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the responses to the pupils' and staff's surveys.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Janet Satchwell Ofsted Inspector

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