

Inspection of Compass Community School Staffordshire

Mountfields House, Off Squirrel Way, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3GE

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

This school gives pupils an opportunity to make a new start in a new place. Leaders and staff work with united purpose to help pupils make the most of this. They set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and make sure they are safe. In lessons, staff teach them the things they need to know. They steer them towards qualifications that will help them get jobs or further education.

Poor behaviour can happen. When it does, staff manage it carefully and do all they can to stop it happening again. Bullying is not accepted. If pupils do behave badly, then staff follow it up properly in a calm and fair way.

Pupils say that the school helps them, and that staff ask them what they think. As well as learning in class, the school organises activities that include visits to a climbing centre, golf range or sports centre.

Pupils have often missed a lot of school before coming to Compass Community School. This school offers them the routine and purpose they need to motivate them to learn. This includes getting them back into the habit of attending school regularly. This is a challenge for some pupils.

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

Pupils usually have gaps in their learning when they first start at the school. In addition, they find it hard to manage their feelings and behaviour, which has often caused them problems in the past. Leaders and staff at this school put a lot of thought and energy into getting to know them and what they need. They then use what they find out to give them the right support, both for their behaviour and their learning.

The curriculum offer is suitably broad and well planned. Within this, certain aspects are tailored to meet individual, and often complex, needs. All pupils study English and mathematics and can work towards qualifications. In other subjects, such as science, computing, and languages, pupils are taught by knowledgeable staff. In all subjects, staff check what pupils know and provide them with plenty of practice so that they remember the right things.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning vary from day to day but, whatever happens, staff stay calm. They are quick to praise positive behaviour and deal with any poor behaviour in constructive ways.

Careers guidance is informed and realistic. It also shapes some of the activities that pupils do in school. The proprietor employs a careers adviser who makes sure pupils know about the options open to them. To support this work, the school is about to start a link with a nearby college. It has also made links with other organisations

where pupils can volunteer. Leaders plan to offer the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme next year.

There is a dedicated reading time every day. On top of this, staff make sure pupils read in class as part of their lessons. There is a small library in school but, until recently, resources for supporting early reading, including phonics, were quite limited. Leaders recognise this and have provided recent training and access to a centrally held phonics programme should it be needed. Even so, making sure all staff are familiar with these materials and approach is an ongoing development area.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum covers lots of relevant topics. It includes the school's relationships and sex education programme, in which pupils learn about different types of relationships and families. They also learn about democracy and can make suggestions about how things are done. Special assemblies recognise pupils' achievements and help them to feel good about themselves. In addition, pupils earn points for positive actions. These add up towards rewards, which helps them understand the link between effort and success.

Staff know what is expected of them because the proprietor and school leaders provide regular training. Through links with other Compass Community schools, staff are able to share knowledge and expertise across the country. This helps to ensure a consistent approach, and staff value the support that they get from leaders. They say that leaders are mindful of their welfare and workload and they get helpful feedback about their work.

The proprietor has well-established routines for overseeing and supporting the school's work. These include regular reports from the headteacher, recording requirements and clear lines of communication and accountability. All of this keeps the proprietor informed about the quality of the school's work. Consequently, the proprietor has been able to ensure that it continues to meet the independent school standards and complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils' attendance, which has often been poor or disrupted at previous schools, usually improves at this school. However, in some instances, lateness and poor attendance continue to be problems. Leaders and staff are alert to this and do a lot to make it better. That said, there is still more to be done to improve it further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are very well trained about safeguarding matters. They are alert to the signs that indicate a pupil may be feeling anxious or unsafe. There are daily staff briefings that keep everyone up to speed with the things they need to know. All concerns, allegations and disclosures are recorded in detail and followed up correctly. Staff act quickly when they have to and make sure the right things are done at the right time.

The school's PSHE programme teaches pupils about risks and appropriate ways to behave.

All the proper checks are carried out on adults who work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils' attendance and punctuality could be better. Some pupils miss out on important learning and other activities and opportunities. Leaders and staff should continue to emphasise the importance of regular attendance at school so that pupils do not miss lessons and fall further behind.
- The proprietor has recently invested in a structured systematic phonics programme, which is available to the school should it be needed. Staff are not familiar enough with how this works. The proprietor should ensure that all staff understand how to deliver the programme and to help weaker readers to develop their reading skills.
- Leaders' plans to enhance the personal development programme have yet to be actioned. As a result, pupils are missing out on important activities and experiences, such as volunteering at nearby organisations. Leaders should aim to get these up and running as soon as is practically possible.

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 (DfE) 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	147780
DfE registration number	860/6068
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10195171
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Compass Community Ltd
Chair	Kate East
Headteacher	Corrine Plant
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	01538 809 055
Website	www.compass-schools.org
Email address	rebecca.slayford@compasscommunity.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Compass Community School Staffordshire is an independent special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is one of 14 schools in Compass Community Ltd. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since the school was registered by the DfE in August 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision providers. It does take pupils to local sports centres for physical activities.

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 school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The lead inspector met with the head of school, regional executive headteacher, the school's careers adviser, special educational needs coordinator, the director of education and the chief executive of Compass Community Ltd. Both inspectors spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, computing, and physical education (PE). In these subjects, inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to staff. An inspector visited a PE session that took place at a local climbing centre. Inspectors also looked at plans and work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and examined several documents. These included school policies and records relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, health and safety, pupils' behaviour and attendance. Inspectors considered free-text responses to Ofsted's parents' survey.
- Inspectors checked the single central record of employment checks on staff, looked at pupils' records and talked with staff about safeguarding matters.
- The lead inspector checked that the premises complied with the independent school standards.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and levels of supervision throughout the day.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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