

Inspection of Compass Community School Lancashire

Granville Street, Briercliffe, Lancashire BB10 2RA

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

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 being part of the safe, welcoming and caring community at Compass Community School, Lancashire. They contribute to the respectful and positive environment that is in place at the school.

Staff are suitably ambitious about what pupils should aim for in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Pupils respond well to these expectations in some of their lessons. However, staff's aspirations are not high enough for pupils' learning in some other subjects. This limits pupils' achievement.

Pupils get high levels of attention from staff. Pupils feel that they matter at this school. They look forward to the social times during the day when they have the chance to chat with their friends and staff. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the opportunities that they have to explore their wider interests through trips and visits. However, they do not get consistently high-quality opportunities to support all aspects of their personal development.

Pupils attend school regularly. They quickly build positive relationships with staff and other pupils when they join the school. Staff and pupils show interest in one another. This helps pupils to gain confidence and builds their self-esteem. Pupils appreciate all that staff do to support their needs and interests.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They treat each other well and poor behaviour is rare. Staff deal with unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and name-calling, expertly. Consequently, all pupils told inspectors that they have not experienced any bullying at school.

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

Despite operating as a school for a relatively short time, leaders, including the proprietor and governors, have skilfully established a safe and nurturing environment where pupils behave well. However, leaders' aspirations for pupils to benefit from a consistently good quality of education and a strong personal development curriculum have not been realised at this point in time.

Without a doubt, leaders have pupils' best interests at heart. They have designed an appropriate curriculum that seeks to build on individual pupils' previous learning and experiences. In practice, however, this curriculum is not as broad and balanced as it should be to meet pupils' needs and ambitions for the future. Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science. However, staff do not have the same expectations across other subjects taught at the school. This means that pupils do not get the best possible chance to thrive in all of the subjects that they study.

The quality of education across and within subjects is variable. Staff do not think carefully enough about the knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that the

activities that pupils complete do not help them to know and remember important knowledge. Some pupils struggle to recall what they have learned. Furthermore, staff do not ensure that the strategies they use to assess pupils' learning are closely matched to the key knowledge that pupils must know. This means that staff do not know what pupils have remembered and what they have not understood. This hinders pupils' progress and hampers their achievement.

That said, staff do track some important aspects of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures that staff know what pupils can or cannot do. However, staff are still improving how they use this information to specifically identify what gaps pupils have in their knowledge. Despite this, staff provide helpful support when in lessons and during small group and individual sessions when they spot pupils are finding their learning difficult. Staff promote pupils' confidence and fluency in reading through daily reading of culturally diverse books.

Leaders and staff have a good knowledge of the pupils in their care. They identify pupils' emerging needs well. Staff benefit from well-targeted training to strengthen their knowledge about how to support specific special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use their knowledge skilfully to support pupils in lessons and through other additional opportunities beyond the taught curriculum.

Leaders and staff have a shared understanding of how to manage pupils' behaviour. The positive relationships between staff and pupils encourage pupils to follow the rules and try their best. Staff are highly skilled at de-escalating situations so that learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have appropriate intentions for pupils' personal development. Nonetheless, the quality of the personal development curriculum is mixed. Pupils benefit from regular, structured social time which helps them to explore their experiences, interests and opinions well. Staff make effective use of themed days and educational trips to give pupils the opportunity to explore some social, moral, spiritual and cultural ideas beyond the curriculum. They ensure that pupils learn about relationships and sex education and health education. However, leaders have not ensured that the taught personal development programme is delivered consistently well. Pupils cannot confidently articulate what they know and remember from these opportunities.

Pupils do not get enough opportunities to think about their next steps or futures sufficiently well. They appreciate the individual advice that they have had to plan for their immediate next steps in education. That said, leaders and staff do not provide any other significant input or opportunities for pupils to meaningfully explore their futures in greater depth.

The proprietor and governors undertake many of their responsibilities effectively. This ensures that the school currently meets the independent school standards and other statutory requirements. Leaders successfully promote a culture of equality. They have ensured that the accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor and governors ensure that many aspects of the school's educational provision and care are carefully checked. They support leaders and staff to make improvements when these checks identify weaknesses. However, leaders' checks do not identify some weaknesses as well as they should. Checks on the quality of education and pupils' personal development do not focus enough on how well staff help pupils to know and remember more. This dilutes the quality and relevance of the subject-specific feedback and training that staff receive.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They said that leaders are highly approachable and support them to overcome challenges. Staff feel that leaders are always considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff told inspectors that leaders make them feel valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a suitable safeguarding policy which they provide to carers on request. They ensure that policies provide staff with the information and guidance to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities well.

Leaders and staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. Staff are carefully trained about safeguarding when they join the school. Leaders ensure that staff are continuously supported to acquire the knowledge that they need to keep pupils safe.

Leaders and staff have a good understanding of what is specifically required to safeguard pupils who attend this school. They use well-designed approaches to ensure that their knowledge about pupils' specific circumstances is refreshed daily. Staff act quickly and effectively when they have concerns. They work closely with other partners to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils do not learn a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs or aspirations. Staff's expectations of pupils' learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not high enough. This limits pupils' experiences, puts a cap on their achievement and does not prepare them well enough for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Leaders should review the curriculum offer to ensure that it matches the needs and ambitions of pupils. They should ensure that staff raise their expectations across the board so that all subjects receive due attention and pupils can thrive.
- Staff do not think carefully enough about the knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that pupils do not benefit from activities that enable them to acquire key knowledge that helps them to know and remember more over time. Leaders

should review the subject curriculums to ensure that staff are in no doubt about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught.

- Leaders do not provide high-quality opportunities to ensure that all aspects of pupils' personal development are well supported. Pupils cannot securely recall topics or content that they have recently studied in the taught personal development programme. Additionally, pupils have limited opportunities to explore their futures in sufficient depth. Leaders should ensure that all aspects of the personal development programme are delivered systematically and effectively. They should ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need to confidently deliver the personal development programme.
- Leaders' systems to check the quality of education and the provision for pupils' personal development are not focused enough on how well staff help pupils know and remember more. This means that staff do not get the feedback that they need to strengthen their subject-specific knowledge and teaching skills. This hinders improvements to the education that pupils receive. Leaders should ensure that checks on the quality of education and personal development enable them to target training for all staff or groups of staff more effectively to where it is needed most.

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	148397
DfE registration number	888/6126
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10210369
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Compass Community Ltd
Chair	Kate East
Headteacher	Christopher Hughes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	07753584581
Website	www.compass-schools.org
Email address	christopher.hughes@compass-schools.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was registered by the Department for Education on 15 March 2021.
- The school caters for pupils with SEND. Pupils typically have social, emotional and mental health needs. A small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils usually join the school with significant gaps in their learning. Many have suffered traumatic experiences and have attended multiple schools prior to attending Compass Community School, Lancashire.
- Leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates from one purposely modified site in Lancashire.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- This was the school's first standard inspection.
- Inspectors met with the regional executive headteacher and the head of school. They met with representatives of the proprietor group, members of the governing body and a representative from one of the placing local authorities.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and staff, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the school's overall curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with the staff responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support that pupils with SEND receive.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with all pupils in the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views and comments of carers submitted through Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments shared through the free-text facility.
- Throughout all inspection activities, inspectors gathered evidence about whether the school meets the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pippa Jackson Maitland

Her Majesty's Inspector

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