

Inspection of Compass Community School Coastal Park

Heather Lodge, 2 Radnor Park West, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5HH

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive on the strong relationships that they form with staff. Prior to joining the school, many pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education. Staff's high expectations help pupils to settle into school life swiftly and achieve well.

Pupils enthuse about the rich opportunities the curriculum offers. They are particularly excited about forest school, where they learn bushcraft, woodwork and cooking skills. Pupils relish activities where they get to work with their peers and improve their social skills.

Leaders deal with any bullying well and make sure that pupils appreciate the importance of forming positive relationships with others. Pupils know that there are adults that they can go to if they have problems or worries. Pupils understand the school's rules and they behave well. Those whose behaviour is not as positive as their peers are supported by staff to reflect on their actions. This helps pupils to improve their behaviour over time.

Pupils embrace positions of responsibility. For example, they are eager to become student ambassadors and lunchtime monitors. Pupils feel that they have a say in the way the school is run. For example, they were consulted about the design of the outdoor facilities at the primary school site.

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

The proprietor, governors and leaders have been relentless in improving the school since the last inspection. They share an ambitious vision to provide a high standard of education for every pupil. The school is a caring and learning-focused organisation that provides a good quality of education.

Leaders have carefully designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have organised learning sensibly so that pupils build on their understanding as they move through the school. Leaders adapt the curriculum incisively for pupils who have had significant time out of school or have suffered significant trauma. Pupils quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and achieve well.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils have SEND, and almost all have an education, health and care plan. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' changing needs and make sure that there is specialist support available, such as clinical therapy, if pupils need it.

Staff ensure that reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Younger pupils often start school with gaps in their phonics knowledge. Well-trained staff address these gaps quickly and effectively. Weaker readers learn to read using books that match the sounds they know. Teachers ensure that daily reading and the range of books on offer encourage pupils to develop their interests in different types of literature.

Staff use assessment well. They check pupils' understanding and accurately identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers carefully adapt and craft the curriculum to motivate and interest pupils. However, in key stage 4, not all staff have the expertise to teach subjects to a high enough level. As a result, some pupils do not deepen their understanding in key stage 4 subjects as well as they could.

Leaders have created a calm and purposeful atmosphere around school. Pupils understand staff's expectations and respond well to their instructions. Leaders share information with staff about pupils' well-being frequently. This ensures that staff have a deep understanding of pupils' changing needs. Those pupils who need extra help to focus on learning or modify their behaviour receive patient and specialist support from staff.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is promoted effectively. They have put in place a well-considered personal, social, health and economic curriculum designed around the needs of pupils. For example, pupils are taught how to look after their physical and mental health and consider different cultures within society. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. However, leaders have not developed careers education, advice and guidance sufficiently well for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. They do not know enough about the education, training or employment options available to them after they leave school.

Staff feel valued and are supported well by leaders. They consider the impact that school polices have on staff's workload and work hard to minimise this so that staff can concentrate on teaching and supporting pupils.

The proprietor and governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They monitor leaders' actions closely and are knowledgeable about the school. Governors challenge leaders well and hold them to account stringently. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously. They have introduced a robust system for organising safeguarding records. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils. Staff are knowledgeable about local safeguarding issues and how to spot if a child might be at risk of harm.

Leaders work with external agencies frequently and ensure that pupils receive extra support when required. Leaders have formed positive relationships with pupils' residential homes so that information about pupils' welfare can be shared intelligently with pupils' carers. Leaders ensure that a suitable safeguarding policy is in place and published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- A few teachers do not have the depth of subject knowledge needed to teach subjects to GCSE level. This means that some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders need to develop staff's knowledge and skills to deliver the ambitious curriculum.
- Leaders have not organised enough opportunities for pupils in key stages 3 and 4 to learn about potential future careers, training or employment. Pupils' knowledge in this area is not as strong as it could be. Leaders need to sharpen their approach to providing pupils with independent careers education, advice and guidance.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135510
DfE registration number	886/6126
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10243538
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Bernie Gibson
Chair	Kate East
Headteacher	Julie Lumley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,200
Telephone number	01303 767801
Website	www.compass-schools.org
Email address	rebecca.slayford@compass-schools.org
Dates of previous inspection	10 to 12 December 2019

Information about this school

- The proprietor changed the name of the school in September 2021 from Ferndearle School to Compass School Coastal Park.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils usually join with significant gaps in their learning. Many have suffered traumatic experiences, and older pupils have usually faced multiple previous school moves.
- A material change was agreed by the Department for Education in March 2022. The school is now registered as providing education for pupils aged five to 17 years. The school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change.
- Most are children looked after.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor, director of education of Compass Schools, executive headteacher, headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics and physical education. This meant that in each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- The lead inspector conducted all relevant activities, including touring the premises, to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 24 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.

- Inspectors evaluated the school's safeguarding culture by reviewing safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff and physical intervention records, scrutinising the school's website and policies and talking to staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils from meetings and informal conversations and from the 21 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the confidential questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and those parents who provided free-text comments.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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