

Inspection of Compass Community School Cheshire

Cledford House, Cledford Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire CW10 0JN

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2023

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 settle into Compass Community School Cheshire (CCS Cheshire) very quickly. They are respectful and eager to learn. Staff expect pupils to achieve their best and to behave well. Pupils respond positively to these expectations. Typically, pupils achieve well and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They learn how to manage their emotions and they develop their social skills well. Pupils develop strong and trusting bonds with staff. They told the lead inspector that staff look after them well. Leaders and staff act swiftly if any problems occur, including bullying, which they resolve effectively.

Pupils' interests are captured in different ways. Some pupils enjoy learning new recipes and baking cakes. Others like to feed and 'muck out' pigs, cows, sheep, chickens and geese at a local farm. All pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and of taking regular exercise. They hone their footballing skills with each other and with staff. They also learn how to box at a local boxing club. Pupils develop their talents in swimming, archery, photography and gymnastics.

Pupils are enthused by educational trips and visits to places of interest, such as museums, the theatre and a local library. Recently, they visited a tractor and heavy machinery factory. Pupils like to participate in outdoor activities, such as forest and canal walks.

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

Leaders and the proprietors want all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to have the best possible experience in school. Leaders have developed a coherent curriculum, which identifies the key knowledge and skills that they want pupils to know and understand. By the time pupils leave the school, most have strong language, communication and mathematical skills.

Staff understand pupils' learning needs well. They make learning fun while maintaining their professionalism and keeping pupils on track. Staff are not burdened by unrealistic workloads. They access different services to help them to maintain their well-being.

In most subjects, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum well. Teachers also check that pupils have understood important information before they explore new areas of learning. However, in some curriculums, teachers do not cover the subject content in sufficient detail. In these subjects, some pupils do not have the secure foundations that they need to attempt, and complete, more difficult work.

Leaders place a high priority on reading. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading skills across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading the work of well-known children's authors. They also like to read factual books and

biographies written about famous sports personalities. In addition to this, pupils read every day after lunch. Typically, these periods are peaceful times where pupils can immerse themselves in a good book. Due to leaders' well-thought-out approach to reading, most pupils are developing their reading fluency well. However, leaders have not developed an efficient way to help those pupils who are at the earlier stages of learning to read improve their phonics skills. This means that pupils who find reading difficult struggle to access some aspects of the curriculum.

Leaders assess pupils' skills and abilities soon after they enter the school. This helps leaders to identify pupils with SEND. When necessary, leaders work with parents, carers and different outside agencies, to make sure that pupils get the support that they need. Leaders also enlist the expertise of specialists, who work across the Compass group of schools, to help staff to tailor the curriculum to meet the individual learning needs of pupils with SEND.

Leaders have an up-to-date behaviour policy in place, which pupils abide by. Pupils enjoy learning and socialising with their peers. They move around the school sensibly and settle to class work quickly. They are polite and committed to completing their schoolwork. Pupils' positive work ethic helps to ensure that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders and staff help pupils to develop into well-rounded, active and productive citizens. The relationships, sex, health and education policy and curriculum are implemented well. Pupils learn about different kinds of relationships, as well as the potential pitfalls of using social media. Pupils demonstrate their leadership skills as school ambassadors. They are empathetic towards those less fortunate than themselves. Recently, pupils started a car washing business to raise money for children's charities.

Pupils are knowledgeable about different religions and cultures. They like to celebrate events such as Eid al-Fitr. Pupils are planning to celebrate King Charles III's coronation with their peers from other Compass schools.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of in-house and independent careers advice and guidance. They also achieve a range of qualifications, including GCSEs. Pupils are well prepared for their learning and training after they leave the school. For example, in 2022, all pupils enrolled on further education courses.

Parents and carers are highly positive about the school and describe their children as being 'massively changed' since starting at CCS Compass. Parents believe that their children's attendance, behaviour and academic achievement have improved at the school. Inspectors concur.

The proprietor body and governors challenge and support leaders to deliver high-quality provision to pupils. For example, they recognise that teachers need additional support to ensure that they deliver all subjects in the curriculum effectively.

Leaders and the proprietor body have the skills, knowledge and experience required of their roles. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders make certain that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff understand pupils' vulnerabilities. They also ensure that staff are aware of the government's current guidelines on keeping pupils safe in education. Leaders have an up-to-date safeguarding policy that is published on the website.

Staff receive regular updates on matters pertaining to pupils' safety and welfare. They know how to identify the potential signs of neglect and/or abuse. If staff are worried about a pupil, they record and report their concerns promptly.

Leaders liaise with external partners to make sure that pupils in need of additional help get the support that they need quickly. Pupils learn about dangers, risks and unsafe situations through different aspects of the curriculum.

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

- Leaders have not developed a systematic way of helping those pupils who find reading more difficult to catch up with their peers. Due to this, some pupils who find reading difficult do not access the full curriculum as well as they should. This hampers their learning. Leaders should develop a carefully constructed approach to helping pupils to read, including by delivering phonics where appropriate. They should also ensure that staff receive appropriate support and guidance to ensure that they deliver the reading curriculum consistently well.
- In a small number of subjects, teachers are not implementing the curriculum as intended. This prevents pupils from building on their existing knowledge and skills as well as they could. Leaders should make certain that staff teach all aspects of the curriculum in sufficient detail.

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	148047
DfE registration number	895/6019
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10267704
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Compass Community Limited
Chair	Kate East
Head of school	Emma Colley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£71,450
Telephone number	01606 537 781
Website	www.compass-schools.org
Email address	christopher.hughes@compass-schools.org
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 June 2021

Information about this school

- The school is located at Cledford House, Cledford Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire CW10 0JN.
- Leaders make use of two alternative providers.
- Since the previous inspection, a new head of school has been appointed.
- The school became a registered independent school on 17 November 2020. The school's first full independent school inspection was carried out in June 2021.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils usually join the school with significant gaps in their learning. Many have suffered traumatic experiences and had multiple previous school moves.
- Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan.

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.

- 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 head of school, the executive headteacher and other leaders, including the director of education for all Compass schools. Inspectors discussed the provision for pupils with SEND. They also held discussions with leaders about attendance and behaviour, and the opportunities available for pupils' wider personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English and reading, mathematics, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector visited an alternative provider. He held a telephone conversation with the leaders at another alternative provision that some pupils attend.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authorities responsible for placing pupils at the school. He also held a discussion with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

- The lead inspector spoke with parents. However, there were no responses to Ofsted Parent View, or the free-text comments from parents to consider. There were no responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. They scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school’s safeguarding policy. Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents. They spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Bather	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023