

Inspection of Compton Dundon School

School Lane, Compton Dundon, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TE

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and proud of their school. Many pupils coming to the school have experienced challenges in other provisions before they join the school. At Compton Dundon school, pupils feel calm and nurtured by staff who know them and their families very well.

The school has high expectations of the pupils. Pupils follow the established routines calmly. When a pupil applies to the school, leaders work hard to know the pupil and to make sure their place at the school will be a successful one. As a result, pupils thrive.

The behaviour of pupils is exceptional. Pupils' behaviour demonstrates the pride they have in their school. They are respectful to staff, towards one another and to the environment. Pupils add the names of other pupils to the 'kindness' board to celebrate their thoughtful acts. Staff quickly identify when a pupil may be struggling. They intervene and provide support. As a result, behaviour incidents are rare and well-managed.

Pupils enjoy the start of the day with physical exercise classes, such as yoga. The day is well structured to give pupils a clear understanding of expectations. As a result, pupils move around the school with purpose.

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

The school has designed a broad curriculum. The curriculum panel has ensured there is a 'rolling curriculum' so that pupils experience a continuous progression through their learning. The school is ambitious for pupils to transition to their next school ready and well prepared.

Pupils are prepared well for learning. Supported by staff, pupils show resilience in their learning. All pupils have an educational health and care plan (EHC plan). The school supports these pupils by providing detailed information to staff to help them to adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. These plans are regularly reviewed. Pupils give their views. As a result, the needs of the pupils are well met.

Pupils learn in mixed age classes. They learn the same content at the same time. However, the school has not considered well enough the explicit knowledge pupils need to know and build upon. Some pupils learn content without having the prior knowledge they need. This makes it difficult for pupils to build their knowledge.

The school carries out assessments to know what pupils know and what they don't know when they join the school. Learning is carefully tracked. This helps teachers to identify gaps in learning.

The school has established a love of reading for pleasure. Pupils oversee the newly resourced library. Pupils read daily. They are enthusiastic about their books. They

read books matched to their reading knowledge. Pupils in the early stages of reading, read with staff. The school has recently implemented a reading programme to support pupils with learning the phonic sounds they do not yet know.

Pupils attend well. Despite the long journeys for some, they want to be at school. The school rewards behaviours with the collection of tokens. Pupils trade these each day at the school shop. Pupils also save their tokens to donate to charitable causes.

The school has planned an appropriate careers curriculum. Pupils engage with a variety of different employers. The school provides opportunities for pupils to understand their future options including attending a careers fair. The school is ambitious for pupils to experience a range of trips and activities to build their social skills and interactions. For example, pupils visited Hinckley Point as part of their science work. The school contributes to the local community. For example, pupils planned and hosted a cream tea to raise money for the church. All pupils participate in a range of clubs during the lunch time. The school provides wider experiences to support pupils' interests. These are popular and pupils take part with relish. For example, pupils in the garden club explored the school meadow as part of a bug hunt.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through a well-implemented personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum. They learn about relationships and change in an appropriate way. Speakers visit the school to enhance the curriculum. Elected pupils sit on the school council. They meet formally and have a voice in shaping the school.

Parents are hugely positive about the school and the impact on their children. Most staff have been with the school since it opened. They appreciate the opportunities for professional training to enhance their expertise.

The directors run the school without governance. They work with an external advisor to validate the impact of the work of the school. Leaders have put processes in place to monitor school development initiatives. However, these are not yet embedded. Some aspects of the school are not subject to rigorous evaluation. Therefore, leaders do not know the impact of their work. Leaders ensure the standards of the ISS are fully met. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- In some areas of the curriculum, the precise knowledge pupils need to know has not been identified. As a result, some pupils find new learning more challenging. The school should make sure the knowledge all pupils need to know and by when is clearly identified.
- Leaders do not have the systems in place to rigorously monitor some aspects of the school's work. This means they do not have the information needed to fully evaluate and review their work. The school needs to ensure that rigorous quality assurance processes are in place that will give them the challenge and information they need to continually improve the school.

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	146335
DfE registration number	933/6010
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10299246
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Proprietor	Propel Education Limited
Chair	Jonathan Lloyd
Headteacher	Lloyd James
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48, 844
Telephone number	01458 555920
Website	www.comptondundonschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@propeleducation.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 to 5 December 2019

Information about this school

- Compton Dundon School is an independent special school. It caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including autism and global development delay. All the pupils who attend have an EHC plan funded by the local authority.
- The school is registered for 24 pupil places. Currently there are 15 pupils on roll.
- The proprietorial body has two directors. Both directors set up the school and are closely involved in the day-to-day running of the school.
- 5 different local authorities commission places at the school. They are Somerset, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Dorset and Bristol. Pupils travel from a distance to attend.
- The headteacher commenced their role on 1 May 2024.
- At the time of inspection, pupils on roll were aged 7 to 14. The DfE has recently granted an exception to extend the age range from 14 to 16.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is registered for mixed gender. At the time of inspection, there were no girls on roll.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 met with the head teacher, directors and staff, as well as talking with pupils and observing the school at different times of the day.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English (including early reading), mathematics and personal, social, emotional and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector looked at the wider curriculum, particularly ICT and the international cultural curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector met and spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the alternative provision.
- The lead inspector spoke with a local authority currently commissioning nine places at the school.
- The lead inspector conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the independent school standards were met in full. This included health and safety checks of the premises, risk assessments, record-keeping for behaviour management, attendance and curriculum documentation.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and responses to the staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stewart Gale

Ofsted Inspector

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