

Inspection of Compass Community School Hereford

Fromes Hill, Ledbury, Hereford HR8 1HT

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 June 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?

This school gets pupils back on track. It gives them self-belief and supports them to make constructive plans for their futures. After the traumas pupils have suffered in earlier life, this school is a safe haven. Here, adults listen to them and care for them. An organised curriculum and specialist therapy, help pupils to re-engage in education and achieve well.

The school has high expectations. These are realised in supportive ways that take account of pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from the school's firm but kind routines. These provide structure and enable learning and school life to proceed calmly and safely. Pupils enjoy their lessons and form healthy relationships with each other and adults. Their attendance is high. Current pupils hardly ever miss a day at school.

Close supervision by adults means that bullying is not a problem. Rewards for kind actions, good work and effort serve to reinforce positive behaviour. Indeed, a consistent approach and excellent communication across the school community have resulted in exceptional improvements in pupils' behaviour.

Adults treat pupils fairly. They are patient with them but still make sure they attend to their schoolwork so that they learn, achieve and experience success.

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

This school is good at what it does. Clear-sighted leadership has resulted in consistent routines, clear expectations and informed plans for further improvements. Adults are well trained so they understand pupils' needs and how to manage them in constructive ways. A well-sequenced curriculum enables pupils to make good progress. Staff help pupils to catch up with any missed learning and build an optimism for the future that sets them up to succeed. In some cases, this leads to qualifications that support pupils into further education or work. In other cases, the school successfully reintegrates pupils back into mainstream settings.

There is a phonics programme in place for any pupils who arrive with gaps in their phonics knowledge. Reading lessons happen daily and pupils read regularly in different subjects. The use of play scripts and theatre visits, for example, help pupils to develop their comprehension and spoken language. In addition, across the curriculum, staff pay attention to subject-specific vocabulary. This supports pupils to grasp key concepts and to broaden their general knowledge. The proprietor provides systematic support for staff subject knowledge and curriculum expertise. For instance, there are regular online clinics where teachers can share practice and take advice from subject specialists. Staff value this input and use it to improve what they do. Most recently, they have been working to strengthen assessment, which is not as precise as it could be.

As well as curriculum support, staff appreciate leaders' regard for their welfare and workload. Inspection evidence supports staff views about this.

Parallel with academic learning, the school provides confidential therapy sessions led by trained experts. This is part of an informed and carefully planned therapeutic approach that is bespoke to pupils' needs. There is also a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. This is taught weekly with planned content and flexibility to respond to local needs. Pupils learn, for example, about the harmful effects of discrimination and why it is wrong. They learn what safe, healthy relationships look like and why it is important to respect themselves and others.

An effective careers guidance programme is in place. Adults find out about pupils' interests and aspirations and look for ways to build further on these. Staff help pupils to see the link between personal effort and success. Where appropriate, they steer them towards qualifications that will help them realise their ambitions. They also seek input from the world of work. Paramedics, police and other services have visited the school to talk about their jobs and career paths.

There is an options slot at the end of each day when pupils can choose activities to do. Pupils enjoy this, but currently, the range of activities is limited. Looking to the future, the school plans to widen the available choices. Similarly, there is scope to plan school trips in a more systematic way so they enrich the curriculum more effectively.

Communication and partnership working between school and home are excellent. This supports consistent messages about expectations so that everyone knows what to do. The school's premises are fit for purpose, and pupils have access to outdoor space and different physical education activities off site.

The proprietor has established and maintained effective systems for oversight of the school. A tier of governance, which includes external expertise, adds another level of scrutiny and accountability. On top of this, the school submits regular reports about its performance using a consistent format. This allows the proprietor to spot patterns and examine trends. These efficient checks and support for the school have ensured that the independent school standards continue to be met. Leaders at both local and higher levels also ensure the school continues to build further on existing strengths.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Safeguarding guidance is well understood. All the required information is published on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Assessment in some areas of the curriculum is still being developed. The curriculum identifies what pupils need to know. However, the school's checks on what pupils remember and can do are not as focused as they could be. The school should continue to sharpen assessment so that it is manageable and efficient and informs the next steps in learning.
- The school's programme of enrichment activities is not as effective as it could be in strengthening pupils' wider development. Currently, worthy things happen but not in a carefully thought-out way. This limits some of the choices and activities available to pupils. The school should press on with its plans for a more coherent approach to planning enrichment activities.

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	147220
DfE registration number	884/6018
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10322601
Type of school	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	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Compass Community Ltd
Chair	Bernie Gibson
Headteacher	David Wilkinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,971
Telephone number	07521 056 223
Website	www.compass-schools.org
Email address	david.wilkinson@compass-schools.org
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 July 2021

Information about this school

- Compass Community School Hereford is an independent special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is one of 21 schools run by Compass Community Ltd.
- This is the school's second standard inspection since being registered by the Department for Education in August 2019.
- 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met and talked with the headteacher, staff and pupils. They also had meetings with the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer and the director of education and assistant director from Compass Community Ltd.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, mathematics, science and PSHE education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other subjects in less depth.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed staff interactions and pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff and parents.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation published on the school's website. They also checked the premises and looked at documents and records kept in school.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jonathan Leonard

His Majesty's Inspector

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