

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Compass

307a Chickerell Road, Westham, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0QU

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

## **Outcome**

The Compass has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The Compass is highly successful at gaining pupils' trust and confidence so that they re-engage with learning. Staff are unrelenting in their ambition to give pupils every chance to achieve and be positive members of their communities. This is very much the shared vision and ethos of the school. Pupils appreciate the efforts from staff to make them feel safe and valued, after previously negative experiences of education.

The school's expectations of pupils' academic and wider development are high. New pupils join the school regularly. They settle in well because of the well-embedded nurturing and respectful culture. Through their positive interactions with each other, staff inspire pupils to replicate this culture. Pupils use the support that is readily available to manage their emotions and behaviour with increasing success. The result is that pupils enjoy being in school and achieve the outcomes they need to succeed in their next stage.

The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. It achieves this in many ways, for example, through a rich offer of vocational learning and opportunities to experience the world of work. Staff know pupils well. They get the best from them, no matter how long they are at the school.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum has the necessary structure and flexibility so that pupils' needs can be met successfully. Pupils are at the centre of this and their voice is regularly captured to inform the school's decision-making about the education offer. For example, the structure of and variety in enrichment on a Friday afternoon, and catering returning as a curriculum subject.

The school has prioritised reading. It has focused on increasing pupils' confidence and understanding of what they read. It does this through daily practice and regular interventions for those pupils that need additional support. However, the school has not established a clear strategy to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise they need to build on pupils' existing reading ability. The training that has taken place to enable this is not widely embedded. Consequently, pupils do not increase their fluency and understanding of what they read as effectively as they could.

From the moment pupils start, the school makes continual and accurate checks on what they know. As a result, learning is well-matched to their ability, as well as their interests. Staff benefit from high-quality training and development in order to make a difference to the pupils at the school and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, the school now needs to embed the changes resulting from recent training. This will make sure that staff across the school have the knowledge and expertise they need to make the most impact on pupils' learning and development.

Staff are highly attuned to pupils' emotional and behavioural cues. They skilfully use positive approaches that support pupils' well-being and get them ready to learn. Pupils are sensitively and respectfully given the space, time, and strategies that they need to successfully get back on track. As a result, for the most part, the school is calm and pupils' attendance increases. Pupils learn to understand and show tolerance towards those pupils who struggle most with their emotions and behaviour.

The opportunities for pupils' personal development are impressive. They are responsive to pupils' interests and aspirations. There is a broad and well-rounded enrichment programme which supports the wider curriculum offer. It is structured to motivate pupils to learn and to increase their self-awareness. This is enhanced further by a range of experiences in the world of work. Pupils get high-quality advice and guidance for pupils' successful transition into employment, education or training. All of this prepares them well for future success.

The governing body enables highly effective leadership, as well as understanding and support to overcome some of the challenges the school faces. For example, the need for continual flexibility in the curriculum and the limitations presented by the school building. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They provide effective support for one another, so that the work of the school significantly improves pupils' experiences of education and their future destinations.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's strategy for reading has focused mainly on re-engaging pupils with reading for pleasure. As a result, pupils do not improve their reading abilities as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills that they need to support pupils to learn to read well, so that they can access their learning with greater independence across the curriculum.
- Many of the school's recent changes and developments, made in response to the ever-changing cohort of pupils on its roll, are not fully embedded. As a result, at times, staff do not have the extent of knowledge and expertise needed to support pupils in a range of ways, beyond reliance on an adult. The school should now take the time to embed the training and expertise that many of the staff have benefited from, to make the best possible impact on pupils' achievements and increase their independence.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2015.

## 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134373
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344578
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	53
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Glazier
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.compass.dorset.sch.uk">www.compass.dorset.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Compass is a pupil referral unit for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, pupils who have been permanently excluded and pupils who cannot access mainstream school due to a medical need. The school also has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, specifically social, emotional and mental health.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently has pupils on its roll from Year 8 through to Year 11.
- The Compass has recently opened 'Compass Plus'. This is an outdoor provision located in Tolpuddle. The site has full-time key stage 4 pupils attending who have been out of school for a significant period of time. It also provides a location for vocational options for pupils from the main school site.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision. The school uses a range of other alternative provisions to support its vocational curriculum, but staff from the school supervise pupils during this time.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the school business manager, the designated safeguarding leaders and subject leaders. In addition, an inspector met with members of the governing body, including the co-chairs, the school's education challenge lead and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons at the main site and also at Compass Plus, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An adult was present when inspectors spoke with pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school sites.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the school's parent survey.
- Inspectors spoke with staff to gather their views on the school.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

## Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Simons

Ofsted Inspector

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