

# Inspection of Compass School

Green Lane, Millbrook, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 9FQ

---

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 June 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Pupils attending Compass School value the time they spend there. Staff are patient, calm and kind. They are well trained to understand pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Staff develop warm, professional relationships with pupils. Pupils feel listened to, known and accepted for who they are.

Staff are ambitious for pupils. They help pupils to understand their emotions and re-engage with learning. Pupils behave well in lessons. Staff carefully manage any occasions where a pupil becomes distressed so that they quickly return to learning.

The curriculum is well designed. It focuses on the most important knowledge that pupils need to secure during their time in the school, so that they are ready for their next stages in education. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to pursue their talents and interests, and to engage in activities in the community, including in music and sport. Pupils are very proud to have represented the city when they spoke about how to improve young people's mental health at an event at Wembley.

Staff focus on the positives and encourage pupils to persevere. Pupils develop a 'toolkit' of ways to manage their behaviour and emotions. This helps pupils to sustain improvements to their behaviour, and to successfully reintegrate back into mainstream schools.

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

Leaders, governors and staff have worked hard and successfully since the previous inspection to make improvements to the school. Leaders have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve by making sure that the curriculum and provision match pupils' different needs. Pupils are placed in classes which reflect their different admissions arrangements and pathways. Pupils' SEMH needs are assessed on entry so that staff can finely target how they meet pupils' different needs.

The curriculum for each pathway is logically sequenced and adapted to make the best use of pupils' time in the provision. English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE) take priority. Adults are well-trained to identify and fill pupils' gaps in learning. They adapt learning to focus on the most important knowledge that pupils need to gain. In particular, adults skilfully adapt PSHE lessons to match any safeguarding needs or vulnerabilities pupils have, and to help pupils to navigate local risks. A sharper focus on reading is making a positive difference. Pupils who need it are supported to improve their phonics knowledge, especially in the primary phase. There is more work to do to thoroughly embed the school's ambitions for pupils' reading and writing in the secondary phase.

The school's 'SPICE' curriculum is at the heart of pupils' learning. SPICE lessons encourage pupils to be inquisitive about the world they live in and to understand how to be a responsible citizen. Lessons are well designed and delivered to support

pupils' social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional development. Pupils also learn a range of other national curriculum subjects during their time in school, including food technology. In addition, some pupils enjoy attending alternative provisions to support the development of their social and communication skills.

Staff are knowledgeable about each pupil's SEMH needs. Lessons are constantly adapted to take account of how well pupils are able to manage their behaviour and emotions. Staff are well trained to know how to help pupils understand their emotions and how to best respond to them. This helps pupils to become better at managing their emotions for themselves over time. Pupils are really positive about this aspect of their learning because they know this will help them to be successful in their learning and in life.

Many pupils who join the school have previously had poor attendance at school. Adults take a solution-focused approach to help pupils manage coming to school more regularly. As a result, most pupils' attendance improves. For those who have been out of education for some time, the school is trialling an alternative curriculum which involves pupils initially learning in the community. Although this is in its very early stages, some pupils are already starting to re-engage with learning.

All pupils have careers education, which helps them to think positively about their next stages. The success of the school can be seen in the high proportion of pupils who successfully reintegrate back into school and those who sustain post-16 places at college, work or training.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some pupils in the secondary phase do not develop their reading and writing skills well enough. This hinders their achievement. The school needs to make sure that pupils are given enough opportunities to practise reading and writing across the curriculum.
- Some pupils who join the school have been out of full-time education for some time, and some struggle to attend school regularly. The school needs to improve the curriculum for pupils who are severely absent so that they quickly re-engage with education and attend more regularly.

## 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>	133675
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296345
<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>	91
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie McKenzie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.compass-school.net">www.compass-school.net</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 to 16 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. In addition, some pupils have further special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some pupils have, or are being assessed for, an education, health and care plan.
- Many of the pupils have been, or are at risk of being, permanently excluded from school. Pupils who have been excluded from school attend full time and are on roll at Compass as their sole school provision. Pupils who are at risk of being excluded attend part time for a set length of time. These pupils are dual rolled at Compass and their home school.
- When pupils leave this setting, they may return to their home school or join another mainstream education provider. A small minority may join a specialist education provider. A few pupils stay to the end of Year 11 and move on directly to post-16 education, work or training.
- The school is supported by a management committee, which is chaired by Colm McKavanagh.
- The school also provides some outreach services for local schools for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- 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 10 unregistered providers of alternative provision.

## **Information about this inspection**

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the management committee, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- 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.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of staff through the confidential staff survey and through discussions with two groups of staff. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils through discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

## **Inspection team**

Catherine Old, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipsz

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024