

Compass School Southwark

Drummond Road, Bermondsey SE16 2BT

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked effectively to improve standards across the school since the last inspection. Leaders have sharply focused on the identified areas for improvement, using effective external support to help refine their strategies.
- The most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their peers. Where progress is slower, for example in science, leaders have implemented effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers plan lessons well, considering the needs of pupils in their classes. Sometimes teachers' expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning and achievement are not high enough, and so pupils, particularly White British disadvantaged boys, do less well than their peers.
- Effective teaching supports good progress over time. However, the school's literacy policy is not fully established because a small proportion of teachers are less effective at promoting pupils' literacy through their subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective care and support they receive.
- Pupils' attendance and behaviour have improved considerably over time, so that they are now good. Leaders and staff have developed effective procedures that improve pupils' attitudes to school life and learning.
- The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Daily enrichment activities provide pupils with a range of opportunities that develop their confidence and resilience and assist pupils' preparation for the world of work.
- The school's values of aspiration, integrity, exploration and resilience are evident around the school. Pupils' positive attitudes to school reflect staff's work to raise the bar of what pupils expect to achieve at school.
- As the school has grown, external challenges have been overcome successfully. Leaders recognise that some aspects require further refinement to sustain and improve further teaching and learning as the school grows and new staff join the school.
- The school's work to support vulnerable pupils is strong. Members of the school's pastoral team, including heads of house, work well together to improve pupils' performance. This is particularly the case for the higher than average proportion of pupils who join the school mid year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning and achievement are consistently high, particularly those of teachers new to the school
 - improving teaching and learning in science and raising the achievement of White British disadvantaged boys.
- Leaders should ensure that:
 - pupils' literacy is consistently well supported across the curriculum by quickly embedding the new literacy policy
 - the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment is sustained and improved further as the school continues to grow.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors used the findings of the last inspection report to focus their plans for improvement. Leaders have focused on raising standards of achievement and behaviour in particular. This links to the school's ethos of raising aspirations to help pupils to access appropriate destinations after school.
- The leadership team has grown as the school has continued to expand. New leadership positions, including heads of house, have provided the necessary capacity to achieve the school's aims. Middle leaders play an effective role in supporting school developments, particularly in improving attendance over time.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's work. They, along with governors, are unwavering in their ambition for pupils to achieve their full potential. They recognise that there remains some work to do in order to ensure that outcomes are consistently strong across every subject. Staff turnover in mathematics and science has been managed well to minimise disruption to pupils' learning, but this has been more successful in mathematics to date.
- Leaders have not been complacent or treated staff turnover as an excuse for variability in teaching and learning in the past. Any remaining inconsistency in teaching quality continues to reduce quickly because of the effective training and development of staff, particularly those new to teaching and/or the school.
- Effective partnerships with local secondary schools have further reduced the impact of external challenges. They have helped subject leaders to refine their plans for development, providing scope for staff to work with colleagues from other schools when planning their work. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been supported well. School leaders have worked effectively with external experts to ensure that the provision remains good while new leadership is established. As a result, additional funding for these pupils is spent wisely.
- The school uses the pupil premium and catch-up premium effectively to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who join the school with lower than expected literacy and numeracy skills. Following the recommended external review of the school's use of the pupil premium, leaders and governors now confidently scrutinise the impact of additional funding on pupils' outcomes, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, overall these groups are achieving well and in line with their peers.
- The school's ethos has shaped the school's curriculum. The well-balanced curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to study a wide range of academic subjects at key stages 3 and 4, including some work-related subjects. Successful planning by leaders has ensured that the challenges of the revised arrangements for GCSE have been well anticipated in readiness for the school's first examination entries in 2018. Effective links with primary schools mean that the curriculum also builds on the knowledge and skills that pupils arrive with in Year 7.
- The school's enrichment programme provides a good balance to the curriculum because pupils have the time and space to develop skills that prepare them well for

life in modern Britain. This includes developing respect and tolerance for the views and values of others. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the opportunities created to develop their own products, and develop their writing and speaking skills outside of academic lessons.

- Leaders recognise that a number of staffing and building changes have occurred since the school opened. Leaders have worked effectively to improve their communications with parents and carers to support positive relationships with the school as it grows. Leaders recognise that their work must now focus on sustaining and further embedding the developments achieved since the last inspection and communicating these more clearly to all parents.

Governance of the school

- Governors have sharpened their scrutiny of leaders' work since the last inspection. Leaders and staff understand their accountability for raising pupils' performance. Governors are robust in supporting the principal to use performance management and pay progression to support this aim.
- Governors know the school well and share leaders' high aspirations for pupils' outcomes. They are committed to the school's ethos and culture and are effectively supporting leaders' refinement of school strategies. Far greater scrutiny is made of leaders' use of additional funding than was previously the case. This supports effective evaluations of pupil premium-funded strategies, for example, so that money is spent well.
- Governors are well aware of their statutory responsibilities and perform them well. Governors' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues, including local and national risks to pupils' welfare, are secured by appropriate and regular training. Checks on the school's arrangements are robust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that a culture of vigilance and safety exists within the school. Pupils reported to inspectors that they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have any concerns. Pupils' perception of safety is strongly linked to their recognition of how much better behaved most pupils are now. The 'nagging doubts' system continues to provide an effective mechanism for concerns to be raised and addressed, drawing on external support when necessary. The majority of parents and all staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys, agree that this is a safe school.
- The school's safeguarding systems and procedures are robust. This includes pre-employment checks made on staff. Staff know the school's procedures should they have concerns and use them effectively when the need arises. This is because staff receive appropriate and regular training, including in understanding local risks and national issues, such as radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to build on their prior learning, developing the knowledge and skills required. Teachers draw on strong subject knowledge to engage and enthuse pupils well in their learning through often-probing questioning that explores and deepens their understanding.
- The most able pupils are particularly well catered for because teachers' planning builds in opportunities for pupils to stretch their learning. Teachers direct the most able pupils well towards more challenging tasks. In English, teachers are particularly effective at developing pupils' understanding of text structures and in preparing key stage 3 pupils for the rigours of GCSE. 'Trail blazers' and 'subject specialists' (the most able in particular subjects) confidently help other pupils with their learning.
- The small proportion of pupils who currently have education, health and care plans make good progress because teachers are clear about how to support their needs. Teachers' skills are increasingly well developed so that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the same high-quality support in lessons as they receive outside of lesson times.
- Teachers use assessment opportunities well to understand how pupils are progressing and intervene when necessary. Where assessment is most effective, pupils are provided with a clear sense of how to improve their learning. Teachers use this information effectively to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs and abilities.
- Pupils' work is typically well presented and supports their learning well. This is particularly the case in art, humanities and modern foreign languages.
- In some cases, particularly where staff are new to the school and its expectations, this school-wide approach is not as effective as it could be. The school's training programme is addressing the discrepancies quickly. For example, in mathematics, despite many staff changes, consistency in checking pupils' work is improving. In science, greater consistency is the key aim of staff.
- Teachers build strong relationships with pupils, based on high expectations for pupils' potential achievement and their attitudes to learning. Where this is most effective, pupils' attitudes to learning are strong. This is demonstrated by their eagerness to respond to questions and take part in discussions, for example. Some teachers do not hold the same high expectations and so some pupils, particularly White British disadvantaged boys, make slower progress from their starting points than their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's values sit at the core of the school's work. Staff and pupils commit to improving the skills that pupils need to be successful when they leave school.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted. Teachers regularly seek opportunities to encourage pupils to work collaboratively and value the opinion of others. The school's pastoral curriculum and broad range of enrichment gives pupils the chance to consider global affairs, including immigration, with sensitivity.
- The school council and anti-bullying ambassadors provide pupils with the opportunity to lead on aspects of the school's development. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about their roles and the pride they take in being able to help the school to grow. These and other opportunities reflect how the school works to support pupils' self-confidence.
- Pupils' welfare is an appropriate key priority for the school. As such, staff work highly effectively in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and are provided with the opportunities to learn about potential risks. Pupils are keenly aware of local risks associated with gangs, knives and drugs. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and practise the advice given when conducting research on the internet.
- The school successfully promotes healthy eating by providing nutritious lunchtime options. While some pupils told inspectors that they would like a greater range of choices, most enjoy the selection over the week and eat lunch in the canteen with their friends and staff.
- Pupils reported to inspectors that bullying is rare. If bullying does occur, pupils and staff agree that it is dealt with quickly and appropriately. The school's records of behaviour incidents involving bullying reflect this view and demonstrate the school's zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviours, including bullying.
- Leaders are right to identify that some enrichment activities, such as the public speaking and business enterprise options, are more effective than others at supporting pupils to develop the skills and attributes needed for life in modern Britain. Leaders' planned review of the enrichment curriculum is appropriately aimed at refining this good provision so that all activities are equally effective in promoting pupils' personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Standards of behaviour in lessons and at social times have been a key area of improvement in the school. Since the last inspection, the number of recorded behaviour incidents has greatly reduced. This has helped pupils to feel safer in school and been a part of improving pupils' perceptions of their school.
- Pupils typically conduct themselves well throughout the school day. They are polite and courteous to visitors and enjoy opportunities to hold discussions with adults. Pupils whose behaviour has been poor in the past benefit from interventions that remove barriers to learning and help them to make the progress that they should.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have worked effectively with parents to support their child's good attendance at school. Pupils who join the school with historically very low attendance often make quick improvements when they join Compass.

- The proportion of pupils being externally excluded last year was high. Effective strategies to reduce this trend have included internal exclusion and an on-call team of staff. Inspection evidence shows that these strategies are working well to raise expectations of behaviour and reintegrate pupils more effectively into lessons. Consequently, the number of exclusions used now is far lower and pupils return to learning more quickly.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. The rules are well known and understood. Few pupils disturb others' learning during lesson times. However, some pupils' attention can drift when teachers do not effectively plan to capture the imagination and ensure that pupils are consistently learning during lesson time. A minority of staff, typically recent arrivals, do not consistently apply the classroom procedures for managing behaviour as well as the majority who do.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes are good because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time is now good. Pupils make good progress from their relatively low starting points, making gains in their learning across the curriculum. In English, the progress made is particularly strong. This is because of the effective whole-school approaches to planning, teaching and assessment combined with fewer external barriers, such as staff turnover, when compared with mathematics and science.
- The school's focus on preparing pupils well for their subsequent education, training and employment is reflected in the effective careers advice and guidance that pupils receive. Consequently, pupils now study GCSE courses in Year 10 that build on the knowledge and skills developed at key stage 3 and reflect pupils' ambitions.
- Disadvantaged pupils, the most able disadvantaged and the other most able pupils in the school make the same good progress as their peers across subjects. There is little variation between these groups' progress. Where differences do exist, leaders and teachers provide the effective support needed to diminish those differences quickly. Pupil premium-funded interventions are effective in supporting the learning occurring in lessons so that differences reduce further.
- The inclusion team provides effective support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who join the school speaking little English and pupils who might be at risk of underperforming. Consequently, these groups of pupils are making good progress. In modern foreign languages, for example, pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by teachers in understanding the skills that pupils already possess and can build on rapidly.
- Pupils who need additional support to catch up with their peers' literacy and numeracy skills receive effective support via additional support sessions. These occur largely during the timetabled enrichment time during which inspectors observed pupils enjoying the range of creative activities that staff use to help them.
- Pupils develop their literacy skills through the regular opportunities to read at school. However, not all teachers are consistently effective in promoting pupils' literacy skills development when they plan learning or assess pupils' work.

- White British disadvantaged boys currently underperform compared to their peers in school. Work in this group of pupils' books reflects slower progress and poorer standards of presentation of written work in some cases.

School details

Unique reference number	139587
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10031700

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leon de Costa
Principal	Lauren Thorpe
Telephone number	020 3542 6506
Website	http://www.compass-schools.com/
Email address	info@compass-schools.com
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Compass School Southwark is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Pupils on roll currently range from 11 to 16 years old in Years 7 to 10. The first cohort will sit their GCSE examinations in summer 2018.
- Since the last inspection, the school has occupied new buildings on the same site on Drummond Road. Firm plans are in place to move into a new adjacent building next year.
- The school does not make use of any off-site training.

- A higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, but few have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- A large number of pupils join the school mid year. The school's planned admission number is 100 per year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 45 lessons and enrichment sessions, many accompanied by school leaders.
- Inspectors met with staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 17 staff and 76 parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work both during learning walks and separately.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with the school's adviser from the Department for Education and the local authority's designated safeguarding officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for development, and assessment, attendance and behaviour information. They also examined policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, safer recruitment, the single central record of pre-employment checks and work with external agencies, information about the school's collaboration with other London schools, professional development and performance management records.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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