

Inspection of a good school: Compass School Southwark

Drummond Road, Bermondsey SE16 2BT

Inspection dates:

16 to 17 November 2022

Outcome

Compass School Southwark continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school learn in a calm and well-ordered environment where they feel safe. Teachers know their pupils well. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ambition is reflected in both the curriculum and in the extensive range of additional opportunities that the school offers. Curriculum content has been carefully considered and is taught by staff with strong subject knowledge.

Leaders are determined to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils take part many different activities and new learning opportunities. For example, they learn to photograph the night sky, develop leatherwork skills, design computer games, and participate in a wide range of sporting clubs. Take up of these opportunities is high.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful to each other and to their teachers. Bullying is rare and pupils know that staff will deal with it when it does happen. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online. Staff are proud to work in the school.

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

Leaders have put together a broad and balanced curriculum. Content has been carefully sequenced and is broken down into manageable chunks. Pupils benefit from a very clear structure to their lessons, and from teachers who are enthusiastic about their subjects. Teachers regularly check for understanding. They quickly identify any misconceptions so that pupils' mistakes can be rectified promptly. Leaders rightly want pupils to routinely revisit what they have learned before so that knowledge becomes deeply embedded in their long-term memory. Sometimes, the tasks that have been designed to do this are not effective, and pupils do not fully embed their earlier learning as intended.

Pupils with SEND are supported to follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Teachers are given very clear information about these pupils so that they can meet their needs in the classroom.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils read together at least twice a week with their form tutors, and in Years 7 to 9 pupils' reading is carefully checked through dedicated library lessons. Those pupils who need additional help with reading are quickly identified and supported to catch up quickly.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, and lessons and social times are calm and orderly. Pupils value the rewards system, and they know that good behaviour and hard work will be recognised. Bullying is rare, but it is dealt with when pupils report it to staff. Pupils know that discriminatory language is not acceptable. Leaders recognise the importance of high rates of attendance and are persistent in working with those families who need support to send their children into school regularly.

A carefully thought out programme of personal, social, health and economic education helps pupils to learn important life skills, including looking after their own health. Leaders invite experts to come into school to talk to pupils about a range of issues, including healthy relationships. Daily 'learning family time' promotes strong relationships between pupils and their form tutor. Pupils in all year groups benefit from carefully considered careers information and guidance.

From the outset, trust leaders have been keen to offer wider opportunities to pupils at the school. Pupils go on a range of trips, including to places of cultural significance and universities. Enrichment activities are built into the timetable for younger pupils, reflecting the ambition of leaders to reach pupils of all backgrounds and abilities.

Trustees and governors share leaders' ambitions for all pupils. They shape the vision for the school and work closely with leaders to make sure that areas for improvement are quickly identified and acted upon. Staff are well supported to carry out their roles, and have access to high-quality training and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are vigilant and know to report any concerns. A highly trained safeguarding team ensures that any concerns about pupils' welfare are acted upon in a timely way. Leaders show tenacity in putting appropriate support in place for vulnerable pupils. Governors are very well placed to provide oversight of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Pupils feel safe in school and are comfortable talking to staff about any concerns they have. They appreciate the recently introduced online system where they can also report their concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes strategies designed to revisit and embed previous learning are not implemented effectively. This means that sometimes pupils do not remember subject content that they have previously covered. Leaders should develop classroom practice so that more teaching activities help pupils to revisit and embed prior learning in their long-term memory effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	139587
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10255439
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Douglas Lewis
Principal	Marcus Huntley
Website	www.compass-schools.com/
Date of previous inspection	17 to 18 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Compass School Southwark is a smaller than average-sized comprehensive school which is a member of a single academy trust, Compass Schools Trust.
- A very small number of pupils attend registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 and above with information about approved education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 carried out deep dives in English, science and geography. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. Inspectors also visited a range of

lessons in other subjects, including mathematics and modern foreign languages, and looked at pupils' work and curriculum documents.

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, and with members of staff, including early career teachers, as well as a range of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for SEND, careers education, reading, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector also met with governors and trustees, including the chair of the academy trust.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Yvonne Chisholm

Ofsted Inspector

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