

# Compass Community School Victoria Park

Victoria Road, Tipton DY4 8SW

**Inspection date**

20 October 2020

**Overall outcome**

**The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g) and 4*

- The school's vision for the curriculum is clear: through a combination of academic subjects and holistic therapies, to provide pupils with the skills and qualities they need to succeed in modern Britain. The proposed curriculum has three distinct tiers. The first tier covers the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This will ensure that pupils develop skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. The second tier runs in parallel to this and offers therapeutic support and activities to build pupils' trust and confidence so that they are ready to learn. The third tier covers a wider curriculum offer of subjects up to GCSE level which is matched to pupils' needs and interests. Leaders intend to set high expectations for pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Pupils may join the school at any point in the academic year. Leaders propose that pupils will have a bespoke programme of study and activities, adapted to their stage of learning, which may not necessarily match their age. This is because many of the pupils are likely to have missed much of their education and have gaps in their learning. The school's assessment system is likely to enable staff to quickly establish pupils' starting points and assess whether pupils' learning in each lesson is secure. Leaders intend that each pupil will have an individual learning plan, which will link closely to the targets in their education, health and care plan or personal education plan. The proposed progress reports, which include academic and behavioural indicators, will be shared each term with parents or carers and those who have responsibility for commissioning places at the school. Leaders stress that pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress is key to this process.
- The proposed curriculum is underpinned by schemes of work covering linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. Leaders have plans in place to monitor the quality of teaching regularly. Support for teachers is available from subject specialists who work across the Compass group of schools. If implemented as planned, the curriculum should

ensure that pupils' ages, needs and aptitudes are considered and catered for so that they are able to acquire new knowledge and make progress.

- Through the proposed comprehensive therapeutic support programme, pupils are likely to develop personal, social and emotional skills as they learn to respect others and reflect on their decisions and choices. It is proposed that teachers are trained in specific therapeutic techniques and supported to develop their own practice through regular reflection sessions with the Compass lead practitioner for mental health.

*Paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)*

- Leaders plan that secondary-aged pupils will receive bespoke careers guidance. It is proposed that a dedicated specialist careers advisor, who works across the Compass schools, will support this programme. One-to-one meetings will be supplemented with a range of opportunities to find out about career options from those in industry and public service. Leaders are using the Gatsby Benchmarks to check that careers advice and guidance is impartial and relevant to the local context and pupils' needs.

*Paragraphs 2(1)(b)(ii), 3, 3(h), 3(i) and 3(j)*

- Leaders have ensured that the school's proposed curriculum plans and schemes of work do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values are consistent with the ethos of the school and its stated aims.
- The school's intended behaviour policy places an emphasis on reinforcing positive behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are clearly set out. Pupils will begin each day and each lesson with a 'clean slate'. The policy includes a 'no exclusions' statement. This is because leaders say that their pupils are likely to have been rejected many times in their lives and they want pupils to know that this school cares about them and will not reject them. In this way, leaders aim to build pupils' trust. At the end of each day, pupils will reflect on their behaviour and how they might improve it. Pupils will be supported to celebrate successes and take responsibility for their own actions.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 1.

## Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

*Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii) and 5(d)(iii)*

- Pupils who attend the Compass Community School Victoria Park are likely to have faced many challenges in their lives. As a result, they are likely to have a range of needs. The school's plans to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development take account of pupils' need to rebuild trust and respect for others. Leaders are committed and passionate about helping pupils overcome barriers to learning. Leaders aim to encourage pupils to 'not just follow the crowd', but to make up their own minds and be ready to accept responsibility for their actions.
- Activities are planned to engage pupils in projects in the wider community to develop pride in the local area and in the school. The planned activities include police cadets, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, leadership opportunities and community support challenges, such as traffic monitoring.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 2.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- The school has appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard pupils. The safeguarding policy is in line with current government guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education', published in September 2020. The proposed staff induction programme covers safeguarding and training to support pupils' mental health. The deputy headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and the regional executive headteacher is also trained in this role.

#### *Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10 and 14*

- Policies in place for behaviour and 'counter-bullying' stress the needs of pupils attending the school, many of whom may present challenging behaviour. The policies outline what action will be taken should bullying occur. There is a recognition that support will be needed for both the bully and the victim. These policies are integral elements of the school's ethos. If implemented effectively, these strategies are likely to promote good behaviour.

#### *Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The school's health and safety policy sets out how leaders plan to ensure that the school complies with all regulations.
- A recent fire safety and compliance check showed that there were some additional measures that needed to be taken to ensure the building was compliant. Leaders have monitored progress closely to ensure that, having rectified these issues, the school now meets the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The school's first-aid policy is appropriate and, if implemented effectively, is likely to ensure that first aid is available quickly and delivered by trained personnel.
- The proposed ratio of staff to pupils will be two to one. This level of supervision will be appropriate to cater for the needs of the proposed pupils and to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils.
- Leaders have already established registers for admissions and attendance, which record all the required information. The template documents are in place ready to admit the first pupils to the school.
- The school has a health and safety policy and a separate risk assessment policy. Leaders shared examples of risk assessments that will be carried out for each individual pupil and for specific activities such as educational visits. The risk assessment pro forma prompts staff to identify the risk, evaluate the severity of risk and put in place mitigating actions to ensure the safety of pupils. If carried out as planned, this policy will demonstrate effective risk management.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 3.

### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

#### *Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii) and 21(3)(b)*

- The school has a single central register which includes all the required pre-employment checks on staff, including checking identity, right to work and disclosure and barring certificates. Those staff already employed, including the regional executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, regional special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), lead teacher for teaching, learning and assessment and support staff are all entered onto the record.

*Paragraph 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), and 20(6)(c)*

- Section 128 checks have been completed on the education director, chief executive officer (CEO) of Compass Community Limited group, the chair of the governing board and other leaders, to establish that they are not prohibited from holding leadership and management positions in schools.

*Paragraphs 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)*

- The school does not intend to use supply staff. This is because pupils need the stability of familiar faces every day. However, should the need arise, leaders are aware of their responsibility to carry out the required checks for supply or agency staff.

- The school is likely to meet Part 4 of the standards.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a) and 28(2)(b)*

- Separate toilet facilities are available for staff and pupils, and for boys and girls. An accessible toilet facility is provided. There is currently no toilet suitable for children aged six to eight. However, leaders have arranged for appropriate sanitaryware to be installed in the toilet nearest to the primary classroom.
- Toilet facilities all have adequate washing facilities, as well as hot and cold running water. The temperature of the hot water is regulated to prevent scalding.
- Drinking water is available in the kitchen. The supply is clearly labelled.

*Paragraphs 23(1)(c), 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)*

- The outdoor space is divided into separate areas for primary- and secondary-aged pupils. There is adequate space for outdoor play or socialising and physical education (PE).
- Leaders are planning to purchase equipment for the outdoor areas, but they would like pupils to have a say in the choice of equipment, which leaders hope will help to engage pupils in the life of the school.
- Classrooms are well-lit with good acoustics, with enough space for the proposed number of pupils.
- Adequate external lighting has been installed around the building.

- The school has a shower room which is intended for individual use. With low numbers of pupils in each class, this would be appropriate for changing and showering after PE sessions.

*Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b) and 24(2)*

- The school has a suitable, dedicated medical and first-aid room, with a water supply, which is located next to a toilet.

*Paragraph 25*

- The school building has been renovated to a high standard. Leaders explained that the building had been neglected for some time when it was purchased by Compass Community group. A great deal of work had to be carried out to make the building habitable and create a welcoming environment for pupils. The school's maintenance plan states that any repairs should be carried out without delay to maintain these high standards.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 5.

#### Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d) and 32(3)(f)*

- The school has a section of the main website for Compass Community group. The website has links to the school's policies, along with contact details for senior members of staff and the proprietor. The website gives prospective parents and carers a clear overview of the school's ethos, vision and curriculum.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 6.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)*

- The complaints policy for the proposed school sets out a three-step process, with informal resolution and more formal pathways for parents and carers to follow should this be necessary. Clear timescales are included in the policy.
- Leaders intend to record complaints and provide information on the number and nature of complaints and how they have been resolved to the governing board and the operational board of the Compass Community group. This is part of leaders' monthly audit of provision. This process, if implemented effectively, will ensure strong oversight and governance.
- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 7.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are likely to be met. The education director, CEO and regional executive headteacher have considerable expertise and experience in social care, safeguarding and education. Having run other successful schools for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, leaders

demonstrate the capacity to ensure that the proposed school will meet the needs of its pupils and ensure the school consistently and continually meets the independent school standards and regulations.

- The school is likely to meet the standards in Part 8.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an appropriate accessibility plan in place, setting out how the school will facilitate access to information, the curriculum and the building.
- The building is accessible for all pupils, as the facilities are all on the ground floor. An accessible toilet is near the school entrance. Ramps have been installed at the main entrance to facilitate access for any pupils, staff or visitors who use wheelchairs.
- It is likely that the school will meet the requirements of paragraph 3, schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 when it opens.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Proposed school details

Unique reference number	148064
DfE registration number	333/6017
Inspection number	10165378

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	All-through special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Compass Community Ltd
Chair	Kate East
Headteacher	Rebecca Slayford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	07753584581
Website	<a href="https://www.compass-schools.org/victoria-park/">https://www.compass-schools.org/victoria-park/</a>
Email address	rebecca.slayford@compasscommunity.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

### Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	0	6 to 17	6 to 17
Number of pupils on the school roll	0	30	30

### Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	NA	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	NA	30

Number of part-time pupils	NA	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	NA	30
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	NA	30
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	NA	30

### Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Information about this proposed school

- Compass Community School Victoria Park is part of the Compass Community group. The proposed school will operate on the site of a former community primary school at Victoria Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 8SB. The original intention was to open in September 2020. It is now intended that the school will admit pupils as soon as possible.
- The school will cater for a maximum of 30 pupils between the ages of six and 17 who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils are likely to have an education, health and care plan and most will be referred by local authorities.
- Pupils may be admitted at any point in the academic year and will remain at the school for as long as necessary before returning to mainstream education if appropriate.
- The school proposes to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is complemented by therapeutic support to help pupils manage their behaviour.

## Information about this inspection

- This pre-registration inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to assess the school's readiness to open.
- Prior to the inspection, the inspector reviewed the school's application and supporting documents. The school's website and other information was also reviewed, including policies, curriculum documents and schemes of work.
- During the inspection, the inspector checked additional documents such as health and safety information, risk registers and the single central register, as well as carrying out a tour of the school building to assess its suitability.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and the education director of Compass Community group. Meetings were also held with the regional executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, regional SENCo and lead teacher for teaching and learning.

## Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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