# Inspection of Compass Community School Eld Park

Canterbury Way, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1EF

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| Inspection dates: | 4 to 6 June 2024 |

| **Overall effectiveness** | **Good** |
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| The quality of education | **Good** |
| Behaviour and attitudes | **Good** |
| Personal development | **Good** |
| Leadership and management | **Good** |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | **Yes** |

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from the warm and supportive relationships that run through the school. Most arrive with a negative view of education. Adults swiftly get to know pupils and find out what makes them tick. This means pupils quickly see themselves as individuals, embracing and valuing who they truly are. High-quality therapeutic provision means that pupils receive individually tailored guidance to help them continue to develop socially and emotionally.

Adults want the very best for pupils. They have high expectations of pupils. Most live up to these expectations, behaving well and working hard. When pupils' behaviour falls below what is expected, adults guide and support them well to put things right.

Through the well-considered personal, health, social and economic (PSHE) curriculum, pupils are well supported to understand differences between themselves and others. Pupils are prepared well for life in the wider world. This is through a range of activities such as trips to the local coffee shop, charity work in the community or work as school ambassadors. Adults provide helpful guidance to pupils about how to build their independence.

Pupils' future aspirations are carefully considered by adults. They receive useful careers guidance. All of the current Year 11 pupils have secured places on college courses to follow their career ambitions.

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

Pupils typically join the school with significant gaps in their knowledge. This is because of the disjointed education they have experienced in the past. The school has designed a curriculum that effectively sets about helping pupils learn the important knowledge they have missed. Pupils learn well because the curriculum is well matched to their abilities and targets in their education, health and care plans (EHC plan). Pupils build more secure foundations in their knowledge on which to build in the future.

Adults explain new concepts to pupils clearly. Regular checks are made to make sure pupils remember the small steps they need to know to achieve well. Adults are adept at helping pupils remain focused on trying to be successful at tasks in lessons and not give up. For example, pupils write with increasing quality as they learn and apply grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge in their specialist subjects. However, some adults are not as well versed with supporting the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding in some subjects. In these cases, staff do not have consistently well-developed subject or pedagogical knowledge.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive regular support. At times, this is not as precise as it should be. This means some pupils do not learn and practise the exact skills they need, slowing down how quickly they learn to read. Along with

this, not all staff have the expertise they need to help less confident readers to develop accuracy and fluency in reading.

In the main, pupils behave well. The school ensures that rewards for good conduct are meaningful and relevant to pupils. Pupils respond well to this positive reinforcement. Pupils are supported to behave in a respectful manner. Staff understand and apply the clear behaviour policy well. There do remain times when pupils dysregulate. When this is the case, adults draw on their training to help them de-escalate situations well.

Pupils benefit greatly from the school's therapeutic provision. This provides pupils with bespoke support to help them manage their social and emotional wellbeing. As a result, pupils build resilience. They learn and develop effective strategies to help them effectively regulate and manage their emotions. Staff have a deep understanding of pupils' emotional, physical, sensory and behavioural needs. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work and the positive impact it has on pupils' behaviour at home.

Pupils benefit from the wider curriculum offer through the well-designed personal development programme. Tunes from pupils' ukuleles or guitars often fill the corridors, along with aromas from the food technology kitchen as pupils apply their cooking skills. Pupils develop age-appropriate knowledge of healthy relationships and understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

The school ensures that the site is safe for pupils and staff. Regular and rigorous health and safety checks are made. If minor issues are identified, the school rectifies these swiftly. The school identifies relevant risks that may be faced by pupils and staff, such as when using tools and equipment or when travelling on educational visits. Sensible mitigations are in place to reduce these risks.

Staff are well supported by leaders to carry out their roles. Some feel their workload is too high. Leaders acknowledge this and are implementing ways to reduce workload as the number of pupils at the school continues to rise.

The proprietor board and governors work in harmony. They have a clear and accurate view of the school. The well-established monitoring and support processes ensure the right balance of challenge and support to school leaders. The strong oversight ensures that the school meets all the independent school standards. The buildings and school grounds are well kept and safe. They provide pupils with a rich environment in which to thrive. The proprietor ensures that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

## (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils who need additional support to help them with reading do not always receive the precise help they need. They are not consistently supported well enough to become confident and fluent readers. The school should ensure that the new phonics programme is implemented as well as leaders expect. The school should ensure that staff receive training, so they have the knowledge and skills they need to provide precise support to help pupils learning to read.
- Not all staff have sufficiently well-developed pedagogical knowledge or subject specialist knowledge to teach the ambitious curriculum as well as leaders intend. This means that some pupils in some subjects do not learn as well as they could. The school should continue to provide training and support for staff to ensure they deliver the ambitious curriculum to the standard leaders expect.

## 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.

## School details

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| **Unique reference number** | 149866 |
| **DfE registration number** | 926/6034 |
| **Local authority** | Norfolk |
| **Inspection number** | 10321490 |
| **Type of school** | Other Independent Special School |
| **School category** | Independent school |
| **Age range of pupils** | 7 to 17 |
| **Gender of pupils** | Mixed |
| **Number of pupils on the school roll** | 9 |
| **Number of part-time pupils** | 0 |
| **Proprietor** | Compass Community Limited |
| **Chair** | Kate East |
| **Headteacher** | Ian McCrae |
| **Annual fees (day pupils)** | £71,500 |
| **Telephone number** | 01482 777594 |
| **Website** | www.compass-schools.org |
| **Email address** | eld.park@compass-schools.org |
| **Date of previous inspection** | Not previously inspected |

## Information about this school

- The proprietor body is Compass Community Ltd, which provides a range of services for children nationally, including other registered schools.
- The school was registered in June 2023. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school is registered as an independent special school to admit 36 pupils between the ages of seven and 17 years. There are currently nine pupils registered between the ages of 12 and 16.
- The school operates from one site in Thetford, Norfolk.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides education for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs, and/or complex trauma and attachment difficulties.
- Pupils usually have an EHC plan. Pupils are funded by the local authority.
- The school has a governing body. The chair of the governing body is independent of the proprietor body. The governing body oversees the work of the school on behalf of the proprietor.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant regional director of education and a range of staff. The lead inspector met with the chair the proprietor body, the chair of the governing body and other senior members of the proprietor company. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with a representative of one local authority.

- Inspectors toured the premises to review the suitability of school buildings. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- 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.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View or the pupil or staff survey. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with a number of parents.

**Inspection team**

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|---|---|
| Nathan Lowe, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Joanna Pedlow | Ofsted Inspector |

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