

Advice note for pre-registration inspections of all types of academies and free schools/studio schools/university technical colleges (UTC)

School name	Compass School Southwark
DfE registration number	N/A
Unique reference number (URN)	1497
Inspection number	422412
Inspection dates	22 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Helena McVeigh

Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

Context of the school

The proposed Compass School, Southwark is a free school sponsored by the Compass Trust. The school plans to admit up to 100 boys and girls into Year 7 in September 2013, and then to grow each year until the final roll is 600, including Years 12 and 13, when in its permanent accommodation. The aim is to start admitting students to Year 12 in September 2015, with a final maximum roll of 100 in Years 12 and 13 combined. In the first three to four years, the school will be housed in temporary accommodation, comprising rooms in premises formerly occupied by Southwark College in Bermondsey. Adaptations to the temporary rooms are underway. The permanent building is to be constructed in another part of the Southwark College site and the plan is for it to be completed within three to four years. There are 53 students enrolled for registration at present and none has a statement of special educational needs.

The aim of Compass School is to 'treat students as individuals and to understand their strengths and weaknesses and bring out their best while helping them to navigate their challenges'. The school's intention is for the curriculum to be based around 'the 4 Rs – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Relating', where 'relating' refers to students' ability to relate to the world around them and to make their contribution to it.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations, but implementation could not be seen. The school has prepared a statement on its plans to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and a calendar showing how this work will be incorporated into the programme of assemblies and the curriculum. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies encourage the development of a moral code for students and outline their responsibilities. Students will be expected to sign up to a 'Responsibilities Charter'. The school's behaviour management policy describes the expectations for the way that students and staff will behave and relate to each other. The planned vision and ethos of the school encourages respect for self, others and the environment. The school aims to teach students about different cultures and faiths through themes such as 'Diversity', 'Fair Trade' and 'World Food Day', as well as through its ethos, subjects such as religious education and citizenship, assemblies and visits to places of worship. The school's policy on equality sets out a clear intention to 'celebrate cultural diversity' and to promote respect for other cultures, faiths and the rule of law.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99

The school's programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education is designed to teach students about civil and criminal law, and about public institutions and services. Opportunities for students to participate in volunteering, and community events and projects, are also planned. The school's equality policy includes a statement that makes it clear that partisan political views will not be promoted in any subject and that balanced views will be presented to students during lessons and extra-curricular activities.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The majority of regulations are likely to be met, but implementation was not seen as the school is not operating.

The school has prepared a wide range of policies relating to students' welfare, health and safety. The policies on behaviour and anti-bullying set out clear consequences for misdemeanours as well as rewards for good behaviour and attendance. The school has appropriate policies on health and safety, safer recruitment, first aid, safeguarding and child protection. The headteacher has received safer recruitment training, and other staff and governors are due to be trained early next term. Training on safeguarding, fire safety, child protection and first aid has been organised as part of the induction sessions for staff in the first week of September 2013 prior to the school's opening. The persons who have been nominated as first-aiders are scheduled to receive the relevant training in August this year. The headteacher, who is to be the designated child protection person, has booked onto the necessary level 3 training to take place before the school opens.

Admission and attendance registers are being prepared using a management information system and will be completed by teachers electronically, using iPads which can be taken outside in the case of a fire evacuation. Paper copies are to be printed regularly.

Arrangements to fulfil relevant duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010 are likely to be met. The headteacher has prepared a draft three-year accessibility improvement plan which will be revisited once the temporary building work has been completed. The building already provides access for wheelchair users to all floors, apart from the third floor, where there are no plans for specialist subject rooms, so that lessons can be taught on lower floors if necessary. There are ramps at the entrances and exits to the building, a lift to the second floor and disabled toilets on all floors. There are 'refuges' for wheelchair users and 'evac chairs' to be used in the event of a fire. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are in evidence in the proposed temporary accommodation. However, the school does not have a fire risk assessment or report from the fire authority. It plans to have the report produced once the building adaptations have been completed at the end of August.

In order to meet the regulations in full, the school should:

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and arranging a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13)

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All regulations are likely to be met in full. All appropriate checks have been carried out on staff who have been appointed, although the school is awaiting the criminal record check certificates from the Disclosure and Barring Service for the five recently appointed teachers. Governors have also had criminal record checks. All of the information is recorded appropriately on the school's single central register. The school has indicated that it may appoint supply staff. An arrangement has already been established with a supply agency that will undertake all of the necessary checks and forward information to the school.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations.

The school is to be the sole occupant in part of the former Southwark College, which is vacating the premises this month. There is to be a two-stage process before moving into permanent accommodation, which is to be built following demolition of another part of the Southwark College. In September, the Compass staff and students will be accommodated in rooms that need very little adaptation as they were designed to be used by Southwark College students. Most of the work will entail boarding off parts of the building that will not be used by the Compass School. From October 2013, the school will occupy several more parts of the College that are in the process of being adapted for specialist subjects such as science and design and technology. A room is being redesigned for use as an assembly hall, dining room and space for indoor activities such as dance. An outdoor area is being prepared to be a multi-use games area with three courts. The school will also have access to its own sports centre. Showers and changing rooms are planned to be provided close to the sports facilities.

There are an adequate number of toilets for boys and girls, and for staff. The washrooms have supplies of hot and cold water (labelled as 'not for drinking') and the hot water is maintained at a reasonable temperature. Drinking water is to be provided in clearly labelled water fountains. A suitable medical room with a washbasin and nearby toilet is to be provided for September, with a larger room planned from October 2013.

The outdoor playground is small but adequate and secured by a high fence, closed circuit television cameras and lights. Entrance to the school site will be via gates with intercom and buzzers. Outside sports facilities are planned to be enhanced as the school roll grows by the use of nearby facilities such as Southwark Park, which has its own changing and shower facilities.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to the following matters:

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and report from the fire authority (paragraph 13).

Recommended number of pupils: 500 (in temporary accommodation for the first three to four years)

Recommended age range: 11–18

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: not applicable.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens that the planned building works have been completed.