

Dear Compass Community,

As the Easter break fast approaches and we can enjoy the lengthening daylight and, ideally, better weather, we have a moment to pause and reflect on a learning-rich and action-packed term. This has included practice exams for Year 11 students, work practice and colleague observations, student work scrutiny, student voice activities, parent/carer consultation evening, forward planning, budget setting, reports, and various audits.

Recognising that those routine elements of our work at Compass are not as exciting to write about in a newsletter, we can now focus on the enriched learning activities that have taken place. The highlights are captured throughout this newsletter.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible resilience and determination shown by our students, staff, and families. Just when we think we have settled into a rhythm, new challenges arise in life, reminding us of the importance of adaptability and support within our learning environment. We trust that this resilience will serve our Year 11 students well as they approach their upcoming GCSEs in just a few weeks from now.

At Compass, we are committed to providing a safe and welcoming space where every student can thrive. Despite our best efforts, we know that we don't always get it quite right. We do continue to welcome and appreciate the productive dialogue and strengthening relationships which we develop through your feedback. Special praise goes to our Engagement and Reintegration (Pastoral) team, who are our first points of contact in this important work. Student Voice activities feedback this term shows overwhelming appreciation of the way in which staff here support children in their learning and progress.

Our recent OFSTED inspection, which graded us as 'Good' across all areas, is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team. We also recognise there is always room for improvement and that work has already started as we are focused on our school development priorities, particularly in enhancing learning and teaching strategies for all, and in particular, our students with Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN) and in their literacy development. Ahead we will have a focus on preparing our students to develop their skills to stay safe and embrace the opportunities that they require in the rapidly digitalised world, including their critical thinking.

I am excited about our ongoing participation in *'The Chesil Challenge'* and the opportunity to implement innovative practices that will help close the attainment gap for our under-resourced students. Together, we continue to model best practice in alternative education, striving for excellence and success for all.

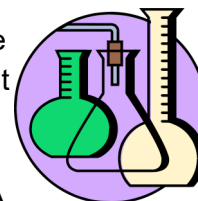
This term, we have said farewell to Teaching Assistants Ella and Jack and welcomed Jacob, Jamie Lee, and Jo to the team. Jo will be known to the children who attend Compass Plus.

Thank you for your resolute support and commitment to our students' futures. Let's keep working together to ensure that every child at Compass has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

I hope you enjoy the following articles and information. Have a good, enjoyable, and safe Easter break.
Alison Glazier, Headteacher

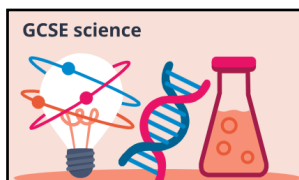
SCIENCE

Key Stage 3 students have been learning about acids and alkalis. They have made their own indicator using red cabbage, and used the indicator to test different household substances to determine if they are acidic or alkaline.



Students in Year 9 are looking at genetics, they have been learning about what DNA is and where it can be found. They are going to designing and completing a science practical where they will be extracting DNA from fruit.

Year 10 students are gaining an understanding of health and disease. Looking at different communicable and non-communicable diseases and how different pathogens are spread.



Finally, our **Year 11 students** have completed all of the GCSE course content and are now using lesson time to revise for their upcoming exams, utilising the expertise of the adults in the room to ensure their knowledge and understanding of the exam content is secure.
Bex

MATHS



As we head towards Easter, **Year 11 students** have been focussing in on revision and preparing for their exams in the summer term. Using their mock exam as a guide they are focussing on targeted revision, revisiting topics and improving their knowledge. After Easter we will be using the time available to practise past papers and prepare further.

This term **students in Year 10** have done some work with data - calculating averages and considering the pros and cons of each method. We are now calculating areas and volumes and extending our knowledge of shapes and learning the different formula for area of shapes.

Year 9 students have spent some time this term working with 3d shapes, creating nets and drawing plans and elevations. On the lead up to Easter we are doing some work with straight line graphs working with equations to plot graphs and getting to grips with gradients and intercepts.

Alison

ART



Some of the Year 11 Arts Award students have been working alongside Catering to produce food dishes to create photography and paintings from their creations for their exhibition project. Their work will be exhibited at Weymouth College later in the year.

The Year 11 GCSE Art group went on a trip to Sculptures by the Lakes, near Dorchester as part of their Externally Set Assignment. The trip coincides with their chosen topics and will form part of their critical studies and developmental work which will result in their final piece in their Art exam.



Sian

JUBILEE CHALLENGE 2025

Our training walks continue with the final event in Dartmoor on 10 May 2025. So far we have walked from Portland to Weymouth, Dorchester to Weymouth, Weymouth to Langton Herring and back and from Ringstead beach to Weymouth. Our next walk will be Portesham to Weymouth in April.

The students have been fantastic on the walks and enjoy the different environments. We have many more students walking in the PE, Health and Wellbeing lessons which has become a very popular option. The health benefits for the students are obvious but also the wellbeing of exploring different places.

Mark



COMPASS PLUS

Compass+ is our outdoor education unit based just east of Dorchester.

It has been a very busy term with all the students involved in multiple real-world activities as well as improving their core skills in Mathematics and English.

Students have been able to use the necessary woodwork tools to create, among other things, a number of wood stores for all the glamping tents, a large dog kennel for the site dog Seal and an enclosed outdoor shelter for when we use the firepit.

We have also been able to take advantage of the 40-acre site to set up a golf driving range which has proved very popular with students and staff alike.

As we develop the provision and understand our students individual needs, we hope to offer many more real-world experiences which can provide an alternative to the standard school day.

Simon

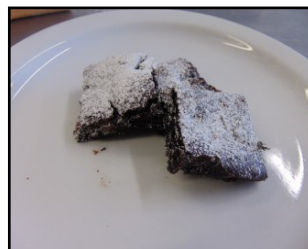


CATERING

It has been another busy term in the catering department with some amazing food being produced. It has been really encouraging to see how much the students enjoy cooking and to see how much their confidence has grown in the subject. The students are gaining valuable skills which has enabled them to produce some excellent food. Here are some photos of their cooking.



It has been fun to once again link up with Sian and the Art department for the Year 11 Arts Award food photography project and also their upcoming exhibition. The students chose a favourite recipe, they then cooked and photographed the finished dish using their excellent photography skills. They produced some stunning photographs of their finished products. Here are some examples.



Catherine

EXAM TIMETABLE MAY / JUNE 2025

Please see below the exam timetable for this summer's Year 11 external exams. Students will be given full details together with their individual exams timetable and attendance arrangements.

Examination Timetable May - June 2025

Day	Date	Time	Duration	Exam
Tuesday	13 May	PM	1 hour 45 minutes	Biology Paper 1
Wednesday	14 May	AM	1 hour 30 minutes	Geography Paper 1
Thursday	15 May	AM	1 hour 30 minutes	Maths Paper 1
Monday	19 May	PM	1 hour	Travel & Tourism
Wednesday	21 May	Midday	1 hour 15 minutes	BTEC Sport
Friday	23 May	AM	1 hour 45 minutes	English Paper 1
HALF TERM HOLIDAY				
Wednesday	4 June	AM	1 hour 30 minutes	Maths Paper 2
Friday	6 June	AM	1 hour 45 minutes	English Paper 2
Friday	6 June	PM	1 hour 30 minutes	Geography Paper 2
Monday	9 June	AM	1 hour 45 minutes	Biology Paper 2
Wednesday	11 June	AM	1 hour 30 minutes	Maths Paper 3
Thursday	12 June	AM	1 hour 30 minutes	Geography Paper 3

YEAR 11 LEAVERS EVENT

Plans are underway for a Year 11 Leavers event following the exams .



More details to follow!!

**Class of
2025**

A MESSAGE FROM PETER VOWLES, COMPASS GOVERNOR

I became a Governor at Compass ten years ago. I wanted to do this because I work at Weymouth College and every ex-Compass student I talked to said how much they had enjoyed being there. They were treated as adults and with respect. It was much better than being at school!

This made me realise how important institutions like the Compass are. The school environment doesn't suit everyone, and schools often aren't in a position to be able to do much to address this. But at Compass, where group sizes are small, and there is plenty of 1-1 support, it's possible to provide a very different and much less daunting experience.

I have been very happy to stay a Governor because meetings are lively and Compass staff share Alison's passion and commitment to ensure every student has the best possible experience they can provide. And it's handy in my job role, as most Compass students progress on to courses at Weymouth College. But I am surprised to have been kept on as Governor - they must have spotted that it's always necessary for me to leave meetings early, just at the point when finance matters are discussed!

I have been working in colleges since 1973 – first as a VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) in Fiji, then in Birmingham, Luton and here since 1983, first at South Dorset Technical College and then Weymouth College. I have Masters degrees in Information Science from Loughborough University and Education from Southampton University.



Because I'm past retirement age I thought it kinder to use someone else's picture!

Peter Vowles

EASTER HOLIDAY & SUMMER TERM 2025

We are sure you don't need a reminder, but we finish for the Easter holiday on Thursday 3 April,

and return to school for the start of the Summer Term

on Tuesday 22 April 2025.



CAREERS

Careers Fair DLC Year 10: Thanks to Dorchester Learning Centre for inviting us to their careers fair. Year 10 students were outstanding at this event. We met people from Post-16 providers and local employers and found out about apprenticeship opportunities and jobs in sectors from outdoor education and water sports to the Army, Submarine Service, Wessex Water and the construction trade.



National Careers week: As part of National Careers week we focused on famous people who despite many failures, kept on going and were successful in the end. *How many of these people do you know?* We also worked on linking skills to different jobs and discovered what skills linked to staff members past jobs! Thanks to all the staff who took part.



Careers Information: If you would like to discuss future skills and career options with your child, there are lots of useful websites that help with this. We have been using these in school with Year 10 this term:

<https://www.lmiforall.org.uk/cm2/> = comparing jobs

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/buzzquiz> = personality quiz and career match up

There are other useful websites on our website:

<https://www.compass.dorset.sch.uk/gatsby-career-benchmarks>

HSBC Banking and Budgeting: In January we welcomed Joanne from HSBC to Compass. She talked to Year 11 students about budgeting and the importance of understanding how much money you need to pay out each month, payslips and where our money goes and the importance of having an emergency fund. She also talked about careers in banking. Thanks to Joanne for her time. We hope to welcome her back again soon.

Skills Builder: We are introducing Skills Builder to help our students prepare for the world of work. Skills Builder focuses on 8 core skills that all employers are looking for in young people. In Life Skills we will be learning about these skills and teachers will be looking for examples when our students are using these skills in their lessons and off-site activities so that when students leave Compass they will have a portfolio of evidence of skills they have.

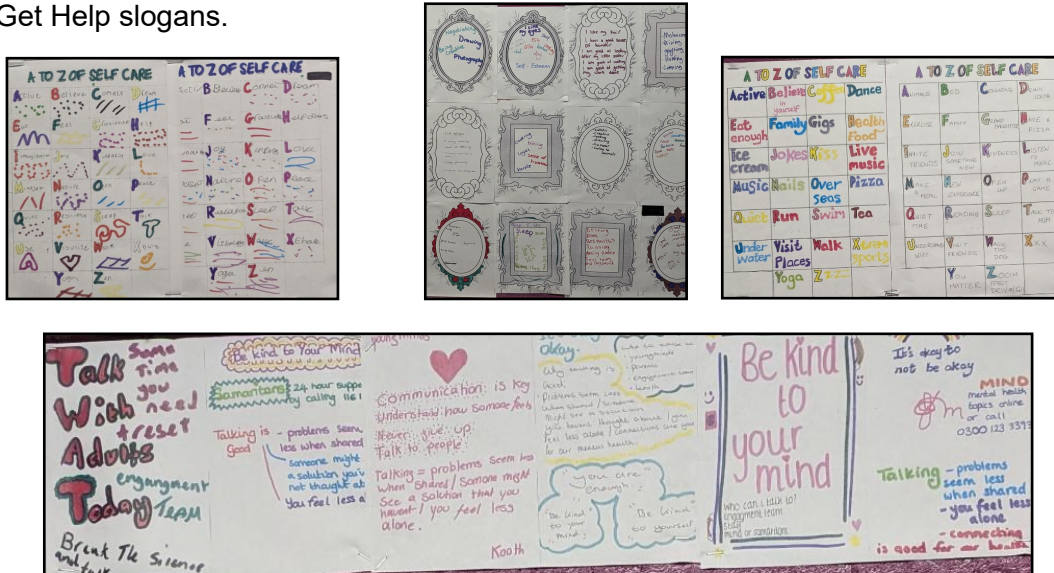


This term our focus is **Aiming High**, setting clear goals and having achievable steps to get there. Teachers and support staff will be looking out for students using this skill in school and off site.

Kate J

LIFE SKILLS

Mental Health week: It was children's mental Health week in February and our young people responded very well to the topics discussed. The focus this year was looking after ourselves, knowing ourselves and taking in where to get help. Thanks to all students who shared their ideas and contributed to our display. This includes A-Z of Self Care, Mirrors of Self Esteem and Mental Health Get Help slogans.



Vita Nova: Vita Nova returned with their performance of 'The Nest' which was very well engaged in by students from Year 11, 10 and Year 9. This is a specially commissioned play which is touring schools in Dorset and the Bournemouth and Poole areas and aims to help students to understand issues around drugs, alcohol and addiction. The play was developed and is performed by people who have first-hand experience of drugs and alcohol addiction. Our students were a very attentive audience and asked thoughtful and respectful questions to the Vita Nova team. We look forward to welcoming them back again in the summer term. Thank you for your time.



Summer Term in Life Skills

Year	Topic area	Includes
KS3	Relationships Education	Physical changes during puberty, the impact of puberty on the teenage brain, consent, different types of relationships, healthy and unhealthy relationships, where to get support
Y9	Relationships Education	Healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships, social media and its impact on relationships, how to keep yourself safe in a relationship (physically and mentally) consent, where to get support
Y10	Relationships Education	Benefits of social relationships, expectations of social relationships, long term relationships, parental responsibilities, consent, impact of drugs and alcohol on relationships, keeping safe in online and real relationships

If you have any questions or comments about the content of our Life-Skills curriculum don't hesitate to contact us.

Kate J

KEY STAGE 3 CLIMBING HIGH

Key Stage 3 students have been visiting the Seal Cove climbing centre in Bridport this term to give them the opportunity to progress in this exciting indoor adventure and where all students were able to improve every week and reach new heights in terms of confidence and resilience.

The group have also been climbing steep hills (with the help of a ski lift!) in order to slide back down again in giant inflatable rings. They all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were very tired at the end of this super fun session.

Our most recent exciting sports opportunity has been weekly swimming at the Jurassic Fun Centre and making great use of their pools and slide to improve their water confidence as well as their mental and physical well being. **BIG THANKS** from the Key Stage 3 team to all the students for being so brave and taking on new challenges.
Craig, Lucy & Josh

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2025

Tuesday 22 April 2025	Summer Term begins
Monday 5 May 2025	Early May Bank Holiday
Tuesday 13 May 2025	Year 11 External Exams begin *
Friday 23 May 2025	Students finish for half term holiday
Monday 2 June 2025	Students return from half term holiday
Thursday 12 June 2025	Year 11 External Exam end *
Tuesday 22 July 2025	Students finish for Summer Holiday
Thursday 4 September 2025	Students return for new academic year



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



The National College®