

The Co-operative Academy of Leeds

Stoney Rock Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS9 7HD

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress of some groups of pupils is not good enough. The most able pupils are not challenged to think hard and too many who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not achieving as well as other pupils nationally who have similar starting points.
- The quality of teaching varies within and across different subject areas. Expectations of how much pupils can achieve are not high enough. Too many teachers are planning the same work for all of the pupils in their class, leading to some finding the work too hard and others finding it too easy.
- Inconsistencies in tackling literacy errors, such as misspelled words and incorrect grammar, impede pupils' learning in a number of subjects other than English.
- Pupils' concentration and behaviour in lessons are not good enough. Occasionally, disruption hinders learning for other pupils.
- Attendance is low for some groups and irregular at times for others. This limits the progress they make.
- Leaders and managers are taking steps to develop the school but the pace of this work is slow. This is because they are not making the best use of the information they gather to focus their work and improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Leaders and governors do not monitor the use of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding well enough to find out whether it is making enough of a difference to those pupils it supports.

The school has the following strengths

- Sixth form students make good progress from their starting points because study programmes are effective. They are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- Effective work with sponsors is developing pupils' understanding of the world of work.
- Skilful and timely support provided to vulnerable pupils, including those who have recently arrived in this country, has a good impact on their confidence as learners and their welfare.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that all groups of pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able, make consistently good progress in all subject areas, by:
 - ensuring that lessons are securely planned to build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills to extend their learning
 - systematically checking pupils' understanding in lessons and asking questions to make them think and to deepen their understanding of their work
 - making the best use of support staff to develop pupils' learning and maximise their progress
 - ensuring that high standards of written and spoken English are modelled well by all teaching staff and a consistent approach is taken to tackle spelling errors.
- Improve behaviour and attendance, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' attitudes to learning are of a consistently high standard so that all pupils can concentrate on their learning
 - ensuring that the importance of good attendance is given high priority across the school and all staff, pupils and parents understand their role in securing good attendance.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance in driving improvements more quickly throughout the school, by:
 - making sure that school plans are focused on well-defined priorities, and contain clear measures to reflect the difference that actions should make to pupils' learning and progress
 - ensuring that all leaders track carefully the progress of pupils and groups, and quickly intervene where underachievement is identified to ensure that pupils catch up
 - making sure that checks on teaching are focused on the impact it has on pupils learning
 - ensuring that effective practice is shared more systematically to improve the consistency and overall quality of teaching, learning, assessment and behaviour
 - strengthening evaluation of the impact of the school's work, especially of the use of special educational needs funding and pupil premium and catch-up funding, to ensure that informed decisions are taken to secure good value for money.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new principal is proud to lead this school and senior leaders and staff are committed to his vision and aim for pupils to achieve the maximum they can. However, leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders and governors are not using the information and data that they collect from their checks on the school's work to drive improvements in pupils' progress swiftly. For example, they have not acted quickly enough to prevent pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities from underachieving. Until very recently, they have been slow to hold middle leaders to account for eliminating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across subjects that lead to pupils' slow progress or underachievement.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's work is overgenerous. Leaders are not always able to demonstrate the impact of their decisions or of swift and systematic actions to secure improvement in relation to the priorities and plans they make. School plans are not always translated into measures that leaders and governors can use to evaluate the quality of the school's work and its impact on pupils' learning and progress through the year.
- Middle and senior leaders routinely monitor the school's work, for example by observing lessons, checking teachers' assessments and recording pupils' absence. However, they do not use the information well enough to ensure that they have a precise and deep view of the school's strengths and the areas needing further work. Training and support from the Co-operative Academies Trust is helping some subject leaders to evaluate the quality of work taking place more reliably. This recent work is beginning to lead to sharper plans focused on tackling inconsistencies and sharing stronger practice more cohesively to bring rapid improvement to pupils' learning and progress.
- Much of the work to drive improvement has centred on an extensive programme of training that provides structured support to develop all teachers' professional skills. Staff morale is high and a very large majority of those who responded to the online staff survey said that they were proud to work in the school and felt leaders supported them.
- The curriculum is kept under close review to make sure it meets pupils' needs. Changes, introduced since the last inspection, provide increased time for learning, and have led to more regular development of literacy skills. Opportunities for pupils to learn about British values have also improved.
- Formal teaching of citizenship and personal health and social health education programmes, introduced a few weeks ago, provides more systematic opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) skills. Opportunities to work together in 'guilds' and coaching sessions enable pupils to celebrate the rich diversity of their school and prepare for life in modern Britain. Staff do not routinely analyse attendance at extra-curricular activities so it is not clear if all groups of pupils benefit from these opportunities.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative and off-site provision. School leaders regularly check the behaviour, progress and attendance of these pupils to ensure that their needs are met.

Governance of the school

- While governors are ambitious for the school and want the best for pupils, they have not done enough to question and check the impact that the spending of pupil premium funding makes to pupils' learning and achievement.
- They are also unclear about their duties for monitoring the spending and impact of the Year 7 catch-up funding and the use of special educational needs funding. It is some time since governors received briefings, or named governors met with specialist staff who lead these aspects of the school's work.
- Governors keep improvement plans under review and check that actions are completed and headline performance measures are met. However, this does not provide sufficient insight to help them evaluate the quality of the school's work and its impact on different groups of pupils.
- Governors are realistic. They know that progress for some groups of pupils is not good enough and they support the principal in rewarding effective teaching and challenging those who do not deliver good outcomes. They know how information about the quality of teaching and learning is used to inform decisions about teachers' pay.
- Governors ensure that pupils are kept safe and are well cared for.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong and firmly embedded culture of keeping pupils safe at the school.
- All statutory child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements. The school works hard to ensure that it engages with parents and external agencies in order that pupils remain safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and the use of assessment varies and expectations are not high enough. Teaching is not always planned sufficiently well to take account of what pupils already know and can do and is not based on sufficient diagnosis of where pupils' understanding and knowledge are insecure. This is especially so in some subjects such as design and technology and in some English lessons where pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who need to catch up, and those who are most able are given work that was sometimes far too easy or too complex.
- In effective teaching, such as that taking place in the sixth form, teachers systematically check pupils' understanding in lessons to ensure that no one is left behind. Not all teaching is of this quality and over time teachers have been slow to adapt and respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.
- Adults other than teachers are used to support individual pupils, or learning more broadly in a number of classes. This expensive resource is not always used well enough to support pupils' learning and progress.
- Strong examples of quick assessments of pupils' understanding were noted, for example in a top set mathematics class when able pupils' knowledge of the new

formula they had learned was tested in quick-fire tests using whiteboards.

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are rising and their skills in engaging pupils in learning by planning varied tasks and activities to maintain their interest generally work well. However, some pupils, in lower sets in English, mathematics and science in key stage 3, do just enough to get by and are not challenged enough by teachers.
- A consistent focus to develop pupils' literacy skills reflects the impact of the extensive staff training courses that have taken place during the last 12 months. There is a greater focus on extending pupils' knowledge and skills in using key words in subjects and most teachers check pupils' understanding. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use unfamiliar words in context but this is not a constant feature of learning.
- Extended discussions are managed well to support pupils in explaining their ideas or understanding in science and mathematics. Opportunities for pupils to work together and to challenge each other's understanding are promoting swift learning in drama and business studies.
- Marking and feedback generally follow the school's policy and reflect much effort by school leaders to improve feedback and its usefulness to pupils. Relevant and specific questions posed by teachers help them to check that pupils understand and have a confident grasp of the topic being taught.
- Occasionally, pupils are unable to respond to teachers' comments because they do not understand them. Feedback to less able pupils is sometimes superficial and has limited impact on their subsequent learning. From time to time, inconsistencies in marking for literacy, with spelling errors and poor grammar uncorrected, were seen in books. Occasionally, teachers' own inaccurate use of grammar slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils receive regular homework that is relevant to their studies.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is tenacious in ensuring that pupils 'in need' receive help. Pupils with complex backgrounds, social, emotional and health needs are receiving considerable help. This is well focused and draws upon the support of external agencies.
- Pupils respect others and are very accepting of those who are different to themselves. Pupils say it is safe to be yourself and they are proud to attend such an inclusive and diverse school. Few bullying incidents attest to their confidence in The Co-op Academy and reflect the determination of pupils and staff to maintain this position.
- Pupils receive regular teaching and information that keeps them well informed about a range of risks to their health, safety and welfare and how to get support and keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Student mentors and trained counsellors provide a first response, with specialist support from social services, police, and health professionals and services on hand.
- Pupils' aspirations are rising in response to good, early advice and guidance about future careers. The school has worked hard through its sponsors and local contacts to provide a structured programme of work-related learning with companies and representatives from business. As a result, pupils know their options. Many pupils in

key stage 4 have firm plans for their next steps in learning or for entering the workplace. Younger pupils are enjoying exploring their options.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Many pupils choose not to come to school regularly. Attendance rates for some groups of pupils are among the lowest in England. The school's work with external agencies to tackle attendance has brought modest improvement, especially for pupils attending the off-site Henry Barran Centre and alternative provision.
- Attitudes to learning are not always positive, particularly when pupils' needs are not met in lessons or expectations are unclear or too low. Low-level disruption in lessons occasionally prevents pupils from making the progress they should. However, in most classes teachers manage behaviour well.
- Pupils are slow to settle to work in some classes, particularly in sessions around lunchtime, and in coaching sessions that take place in guilds, or houses. Consequently, the work rate slows.
- The principal is taking a firm line on the standards of behaviour and has used exclusions to get the message across. Overall, incidents of poor behaviour are reducing and punctuality to school is improving. Pupils say that behaviour has got better compared to the past. Around school, the atmosphere is calm and most pupils are polite and respectful.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress made by pupils from different starting points varies widely across different subjects and between groups. The school's own performance information shows that overall, and for some groups of pupils, the rates of progress that pupils are making in key stage 3 and key stage 4 require urgent improvement. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessment have contributed to this slow progress.
- New procedures for checking the accuracy of assessments of pupils' attainment and progress were introduced in the last school year. This was because leaders were concerned about the accuracy of the information they received about pupils' progress. As a result, the information the school has on pupils' progress is now more reliable.
- Systems to track the progress of pupils and groups and those at risk of underachieving are developing. The school is starting to use its accurate data about progress to identify pupils who are falling behind. These pupils are given extra support which helps some, but not all, to improve.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress across the curriculum is highly varied despite the investment in funded initiatives and opportunities to develop their learning. Progress in English and mathematics at key stage 4 is improving and differences in performance between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. This is because the school has had a focus on ensuring that English and mathematics are taught well. As part of this, the school has 'grown' its own teachers so it knows a consistent approach to teaching is becoming quickly established in these two subjects.
- At key stage 3 and key stage 4, the progress of pupils varies considerably across

subjects. For example, in GCSE information technology pupils make strong progress because of improvements in the quality of teaching, high expectations of the teacher and pupils being proud of their work and wanting to do well.

- Progress for most-able pupils has improved over the last three years. However, information provided by school leaders indicates that progress for the most able pupils in the school remains mixed.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always catered for effectively in lessons. This means that over time they do not make good progress. Although there has been a recent focus on training staff to adapt resources to meet the needs of these pupils, this training has not been fully implemented or checked and therefore the impact is not known.
- Pupils who receive education in alternative provision, and those who attend the Henry Barran Centre, are participating in a broad range of vocational and therapeutic courses. Most are engaging more readily with their programmes and making progress towards meeting their targets.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils move into sustained education, employment or training which matches their career aspirations. The proportion of pupils who do so is steadily increasing.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form is well led and managed and provides specific, tailored courses that meet the needs of its students. Consequently, almost all students settle quickly and make swift progress from their starting points. Achievement in vocational subjects is strong and the small number studying academic courses achieve well.
- The requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met, as are the interim minimum standards. Study programmes build on individuals' previous attainment and are securely focused on progression routes. Students show good resolve and positive attitudes to learning. Course completion rates are high.
- The vast majority of students in the sixth form who are new to the country make good progress. Bespoke and intensive programmes enable students who enter with weak English skills to make swift progress in their studies. Consequently, all gain qualifications in a range of vocational courses that enable them to move onto further and higher education or into employment. A few students achieve A levels in their home languages, and do so with no formal lessons.
- Students entering the sixth form who have not yet achieved at least a grade C in either GCSE English or mathematics, some of whom come from very low prior attainment, make good progress towards securing this vital qualification.
- Students benefit from teaching that is good. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and communicate this well to students to enthuse and engage them. They set tasks that are clearly tailored to build on students' prior learning and deepen and extend their understanding. Work is assessed quickly and returned, and finely focused feedback helps students to improve their work.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are better than in the main school. Students are positive about their sixth form experience. They work hard and some students value the opportunity to have a 'second chance' to gain qualifications. All enjoy a good

climate for learning free from low-level disruption and they make swifter progress.

- Attendance is much higher in the sixth form than in the main school and any absence is closely monitored and followed up rigorously.
- Students have clear plans for the future, due in part to an effective programme of careers advice and guidance and work-related learning, including, most recently, paid internships. Leaders ensure that all students are well informed and supported when making applications to further and higher education or apprenticeships and employment.
- Opportunities for students to lead charity events and work with younger pupils in their guilds enable them to develop leadership and social skills to aid their employability.
- Safeguarding in the sixth form is effective. Students are confident to make good, safe choices for themselves and have a keen understanding of risks such as those posed by extremism. Leaders are vigilant and work with national organisations and charities to protect students who are newly arrived in Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	137065
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10012071

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	989
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	60
Appropriate authority	The Co-operative Academies Trust
Chair	Alan Kinson
Principal	Jonny Mitchell
Telephone number	0113 380 7940
Website	www.cal.coop
Email address	info@cal.coop
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium funding, literacy and numeracy catch-up funding or information about provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school is part of the Co-operative Academies Trust.
- The school runs an off-site unit, the Henry Barran Centre, to provide social, emotional, mental health or behavioural support to a small number of pupils.
- A large number of students in the sixth form are international new arrivals who are new to the country and to Leeds.

- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current principal joined the school in June 2015, following the retirement of his predecessor.
- The school places 16 pupils in the following alternative off-site provision for part of the week or full-time for short placements: The Hunslet Club, Reconciliation Training, Educ8 West Yorkshire, Teens and Toddlers, Excel, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, AIM Education, YES! Project, Tinshill Teaching and Learning Centre, Leeds College of Building and Leeds City College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across a range of subjects, in all year groups and at the Henry Barran Centre. Some observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read, including the most able pupils.
- Discussions and meetings were held with pupils, teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders, the principal and governors, including the chair of the governing body and representatives of the Co-operative Academies Trust.
- Inspectors took account of five responses to Parent View and 37 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation and development plans; records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; and the school's own information and data relating to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures including checks on the suitability of staff.

Inspection team

Gina White, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Redshaw	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Found	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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