

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 December 2023

Zarina Ali
Principal
Co-op Academy Swinton
Sefton Road
Swinton
Greater Manchester
M27 6JU

Dear Mrs Ali

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Co-op Academy Swinton

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 22 November 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspection.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with groups of subject leaders, staff and pupils. I met with representatives of the multi-academy trust and those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I evaluated recent developments to the school's curriculum. I also scrutinised records of safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

Since the graded inspection in May 2022, four members of the academy governing committee (AGC) have left and four have joined. Two vice-principals have left the school. A new vice-principal took up post in September 2022. The school is currently in the process of recruiting another vice-principal. Additionally, the school has increased the size of the senior leadership team. Three new assistant principals were appointed in September 2022, January 2023 and April 2023. Since the previous inspection, 32 staff

have left the school and 39 have joined. The school has increased the number of staff members who provide pastoral and other additional support for pupils.

The trust, members of the AGC and the school have a thorough understanding of the weaknesses in the quality of education and behaviour identified at the previous inspection. They have rigorously identified the reasons behind these weaknesses and have acted with purpose to bring about improvement.

The trust and members of the AGC work in partnership to ensure that they have a detailed knowledge of the school. They are well informed about the school's actions to strengthen the quality of education and the culture of behaviour. They provide well-focused challenge and support to enhance the school's work.

The school is ensuring that change is managed well. Staff are supportive of the school's actions to remedy weaknesses. This positive culture is helping staff to improve their practice. Staff appreciate the support that they receive to strengthen their knowledge and skills. They also value the recognition that they receive when improvements in their delivery of the curriculum are noticed.

The school continues to ensure that pupils benefit from an appropriately broad range of subjects to study. Many pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 choose to study a well-balanced selection of academic and vocational qualifications.

Recent published outcomes for Year 11 pupils in 2023 continue to reflect the low attainment and limited progress seen at the previous inspection. Consequently, the school remains focused on strengthening what staff do to deliver the curriculum and to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Through the 'Swinton Way', the school has introduced clearer expectations for teachers about how they should deliver the curriculum and then check what pupils have learned.

Teachers recap previous subject content and introduce new knowledge with increasing confidence and expertise. Pupils are benefiting from activities in lessons that help them to learn more than they did in the past. However, these improvements are not consistently secure across different year groups and subjects. Consequently, pupils do not make even gains in what they know and remember across the subjects they study.

Teachers ensure that assessment strategies are matched more closely to the knowledge that pupils should learn. Some teachers are making better use of the information that they get from their checks on pupils' learning. These teachers ensure that pupils receive suitable support to address the gaps in their knowledge. However, some teachers do not make best use of assessment information. Consequently, some pupils do not get enough opportunities to strengthen their knowledge where it is less secure. This affects the progress of these pupils through the subject curriculums.

Teachers now receive better information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through well-focused training, teachers are more equipped to

provide practical and academic support for these pupils in lessons. Pupils with SEND are making greater gains in what they know and remember than they did previously. However, the achievement of many of these pupils remains low. The school has suitable strategies in place to support teachers to further develop and hone the support that they provide for pupils with SEND.

Staff accurately identify the needs of pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read. Pupils are well supported by suitably trained staff. Consequently, pupils are beginning to make increased gains in their reading knowledge.

The school remains focused on strengthening the reading habits of all pupils. Form tutors provide regular opportunities for pupils to read a wide range of texts. Subject staff are developing strategies that they can use to develop pupils' vocabulary and reading knowledge in the subjects they study.

The school has very clear expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons. Staff and pupils appreciate this clarity. Staff have benefited from training in how to manage pupils' behaviour in lessons. Consequently, staff manage behaviour with greater confidence, consistency and fairness than in the past. Pupils are encouraged to develop values of self-confidence, integrity, care for others and personal success. Pupils said that they are happier in school because serious disruptions to lessons are much less common. If such incidents occur, pastoral and senior staff deal with them effectively.

The trust provides a range of relevant additional support that has aided improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders better understand the strengths and weaknesses in the support that pupils with SEND receive. The system to check improvements in pupils' behaviour is secure, and subject leadership has improved.

The school makes appropriate use of opportunities provided by the local authority to further support the development of subject leadership. In addition, the school uses mentoring from the local authority to support the leadership of other areas of the school.

The school has made appropriate use of the Department for Education's 'Behaviour Hub' to support its review and evaluation of the new approaches to behaviour management.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Co-operative Academies Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
His Majesty's Inspector