

Inspection of a good school: Co-op Academy Southfield

Haycliffe Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD5 9ET

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

Co-op Academy Southfield continues to be a good school.

The head of school is Victoria Clough. This school is part of The Co-Operative Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Chris Tomlinson (CEO), and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Russell Gill. There is also an executive headteacher, Ian Berryman, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Co-op Academy Southfield is a vibrant and happy school. Staff know their pupils well and are given and act on clear information on how to meet their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. These help to contribute to the calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school, including in the sixth form.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils study an ambitious curriculum that builds from their individual starting points. In some subjects, the curriculum is being developed to better help pupils build on what they already know and can do.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, behave well. Pastoral staff understand how to support those pupils with the most complex behavioural needs. However, some pupils do not attend the school often enough.

Pupils' personal development is a sharp focus for leaders. The school ensures that pupils are prepared well for the world around them and their next steps after leaving. The personal and social development curriculum teaches pupils thoroughly about 'Bradford, Britain and beyond.' Pupils develop their leadership skills by being part of the school council or the Co-op young leaders programme.

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

The school is in the process of refining and strengthening the curriculum. It has identified what pupils need to know and be able to do from their different starting points. In most subjects, the school has broken the curriculum down into smaller steps to help pupils reach ambitious end-points. In a small number of subjects, it is not clear how teachers should adapt the curriculum to help pupils build on what they already know and can do.

The school prioritises reading. Where appropriate, pupils learn phonics daily. Staff receive regular training and deliver these lessons well. Pupils approach their phonics learning with enthusiasm. This enables pupils to build confidence in recognising letters and sounds. Pupils at the early stages of reading are skilfully supported through personalised interventions. For some of these pupils, the progress they have made has been transformative. It enables them to communicate their needs and access the school's broad curriculum.

Some pupils join the school with little or no means of communication with others. The use of oral communication and sign-supported English is integral to the school's curriculum. The school ensures that the needs of these pupils are identified and met.

Students in the sixth form receive focused support. This prepares them well for when they leave the school. For example, independent travel training helps students learn to travel by themselves so that they develop the confidence to get to college. Students study a range of subjects and complete a variety of work placements. These experiences help students to develop the skills they need to be successful. The school's links with employers and colleges support students' transitions into the next phase of their education, training or employment.

Some pupils do not attend school often enough. The school adopts a tenacious approach to tackling pupils' poor attendance. Leaders' high expectations have resulted in a small reduction in the number of pupils persistently absent from school. However, overall attendance remains too low. The school is working to ensure that families and external agencies share their ambitions to improve attendance.

The school provides a comprehensive programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of clubs and enrichment activities such as gardening, sports and sensory clubs. Pupils go on school visits regularly. For example, pupils visited a local museum to explore the work of the artist, David Hockney. Students in the sixth form get the opportunity to attend residential activities and complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This develops their social and emotional skills and builds their resilience, independence and character.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. Recent staffing issues have contributed to an increased workload for some staff. However, staff feel that new leaders are managing this well and are mindful of their well-being. They are proud to work at the school and feel part of a team. Trustees provide effective support and challenge to the school. They know the school well. Leaders at all levels are open and honest about its strengths and the areas needing further development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, it is not clear how teachers should adapt the curriculum to help pupils build on what they already know and can do. This means that the implementation of the curriculum varies. The school needs to ensure teachers are clear about how learning can be broken down for pupils from different starting points.
- Some pupils, including some pupils who receive transport to and from school, are absent from school too often. These pupils miss too much important learning and educational experiences. The school should continue to work with families and external agencies to overcome any barriers to pupils' regular attendance.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2015.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139978
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10297392
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	112
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Russell Gill
Headteacher	Victoria Clough
Website	https://southfield.coopacademies.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Co-op Academy Southfield is a special school for pupils with SEND aged between 11 and 19 years.
- The school is based at two sites. One school site is co-located with Co-op Academy Grange.
- The school makes provision for pupils with complex SEND. This includes those with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autism. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and personal and social development. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They reviewed pupils' EHC plans. Inspectors visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on external suspensions.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body, board of trustees and the CEO.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Berni Moorcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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