

Co-op Academy North Manchester

300 Victoria Avenue East, Blackley, Manchester M9 7SS

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders, including those of the Co-op Academies Trust, have provided expert and determined leadership to secure the good quality of education provided at the school.
- Leaders promote positive values clearly and consistently. They support a culture where pupils are confident, considerate of others and hard-working. As a result, pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and learn well.
- Senior leaders, including governors, know the school well. They recognise its strengths, but are not complacent. They are determined and well-equipped to improve pupils' outcomes further.
- Leaders have very clearly demonstrated the capacity to realise their ambition to improve the school further. They have transformed pupils' attendance and conduct.
- Teaching is good across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Although teaching in science is improving, it is not as strong as other subjects.
- Subject leadership is effective. Subject leaders have played an important role in improving teaching.
- Leaders' work to strengthen the curriculum is effective. As a result, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to think about, deepen and extend what they know and understand.
- Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop their literacy. As a result, they read, speak and write with impressive confidence.
- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. Some pupils suffer from a legacy of weak teaching or poor attendance. As a result, despite making better progress than previously, these pupils are not consistently working at the standard of which they are capable. This is most clearly seen in science, for some boys and for the most able pupils.
- The management of the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is good. These pupils attend school regularly, participate fully in the wide range of extra-curricular activities which the school provides and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are courteous, happy and confident. Pupils' conduct around school and attitudes to learning are positive.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils develop a strong sense of the world in which they live. They understand and value differences, and say that they feel confident and safe to be who they want to be.
- A strong culture of safeguarding exists throughout the school. Pupils say that staff know them and care about their well-being.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon improvements to pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils make consistently good progress across a range of subjects, particularly in science
 - the progress of boys continues to improve
 - improvements in the progress of the most able pupils are embedded across subject areas and year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The actions of senior leaders to overcome the significant weaknesses of the predecessor school have been effective. The standard of education which pupils received at the previous school was inadequate. Senior leaders, including those of the Co-op Academies Trust, have used their expertise and energy to resolve the various barriers which previously prevented pupils' success. As a result, leaders at the new school have transformed the standard of education. Pupils attend school regularly, behave well and are typically taught effectively.
- Senior leaders are extremely ambitious for pupils and take effective actions to translate this ambition into tangible success for pupils. Leaders recognise the significant improvements which they have already achieved, but are not complacent. Leaders at all levels have an impressive and accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and those areas needing further attention. This clarity of the way ahead has had a positive impact on leaders' work. For example, the actions of leaders to improve the attendance of pupils, which was previously extremely low and a major factor contributing to their weak progress, is now consistently good.
- Leaders are clear that pupils' outcomes require further strengthening. They recognise that some current pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills as a result of a legacy of previously weak teaching and poor leadership. Actions are in place to resolve this situation and help pupils to work at the standards of which they are capable. Success is evident in the transformation of the quality of teaching. This has been effective in reducing the impact of this legacy, but despite the trend of improvement, current weaknesses in outcomes remain. This is especially the case for some boys, the most able pupils and for pupils in science.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the pupils and community that they serve. As a result, staff are trained to recognise and support pupils in overcoming any barriers and challenges that they face. The most vulnerable pupils, including those with educational, health and care (EHC) plans, or those who join part-way through the year from other schools or as international new arrivals, are known, cared for and supported very well. This enables pupils to be in a better frame of mind to learn and benefit from the good standard of education now being provided.
- The actions of leaders to improve the quality of teaching are effective. The training programme, which leaders manage, has been pivotal in securing typically good-quality teaching. Training is well planned and implemented. It supports effectively the many newly and recently-qualified staff at the school and has also resulted in stronger teaching from established staff. Leaders, including subject leaders, are aware of where teaching is at its strongest and offer support when it is required.
- The quality of subject leadership across the school is effective. A significant proportion of heads of department are relatively new to their posts. They are being supported in their roles by the more experienced senior leaders in the school and from within the trust. Subject leaders have a clear understanding of their department's strengths and areas for improvement. They are taking appropriate action to improve outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders at all levels have a sharp focus on strengthening the curriculum. In both key stage 3 and key stage 4, pupils are provided with the range of courses and learning experiences they require to follow the subjects which interest them successfully. Leaders, including subject leaders, focus on providing pupils with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding and applying this learning.
- In Year 7, the curriculum builds upon the pupils' primary school experience. Leaders have developed meaningful contacts with primary-based colleagues to ensure that the work pupils are set in key stage 3 builds on prior learning. Leaders know where some pupils, especially those in key stage 4, have not learned effectively previously. As a result, they have restructured the curriculum to overcome gaps in their knowledge. Occasionally, the curriculum does not provide for pupils to work at the highest standards, particularly in science.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to strengthen the effectiveness of the curriculum for those pupils who access alternative provision. Previously, these pupils were less likely to engage successfully in these off-site courses and were the most likely pupils to be permanently excluded from school. Leaders have assessed the benefit of these providers for their pupils, streamlined their use and also established their own alternative provision courses.
- Leaders plan an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for pupils. These comprehensively cater for pupils' wider academic, cultural, artistic and sporting interests. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), regularly participate in the activities provided. These activities also include events which open their eyes to the world in which they live and the difference that they can make in it, such as those focused on Fair Trade. This aspect of the curriculum effectively promotes pupils' awareness of wider issues and life in modern Britain.
- The careers guidance programme is good. Pupils receive information throughout key stages 3 and 4, which meets their requirements. This includes independent advice. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, move on to aspirational next steps in education or employment.
- Leaders have used the additional funds provided by the pupil premium effectively. Leaders demonstrate commitment to helping these pupils overcome their many and varied barriers to learning. Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that these pupils routinely benefit from high-quality teaching. Disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly and they benefit from their typically positive engagement in learning and good conduct around school. The progress that these pupils make has improved rapidly since the present school opened.
- The management of the spending of the funding provided for pupils with SEND is effective. The leadership of the support for these pupils has been strengthened over the past 18 months and pupils requiring support are now identified quickly and accurately. The well-being and health of pupils with SEND, including those with an EHC plan, are catered for effectively. The well-being and health of pupils with SEND, are catered for effectively. Pupils with SEND, particularly those with an EHC plan, make good progress because teachers respond to their requirements well. Occasionally, teachers do not support and challenge pupils with SEND, but without an EHC plan, which restricts their progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. The chief executive officer and trustees have a consistent and sharp insight of the school's current strengths and a clear rationale for the next aspects which they wish to develop. The actions which they have taken, since the trust took responsibility for the school, have transformed the standard of education which pupils consistently receive.
- Governors actively set and promote the school's key values. They are firmly based in the ethos of the Co-operative movement and a focus on respect, commitment and trust. These values consistently underpin the actions that are taken by leaders and staff at the school. They work together and share a commitment to the pupils.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. Their areas of expertise ensure that they are confident and capable when supporting and challenging senior leaders. Governors' experience of financial management is used effectively to support senior leaders' plans to strengthen further the quality of education that the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously. They take positive action to ensure that the school's safeguarding systems and practice are up to date and effective, including by taking advice from external agency reviews.
- Checks made by inspectors found that staff, including non-teaching staff, are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. This includes risks of child sexual exploitation, drug and gang related crime, and radicalisation. Staff take the time to know pupils well and give great attention to their safety and well-being.
- Leaders maintain effective safeguarding records. They have systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Leaders' work with external agencies and parents and carers is effective. They act swiftly when required to secure pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals are made to external agencies as appropriate.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including when online. They are clear who they should report concerns to and how to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The actions of leaders since the school replaced its predecessor in March 2016 have significantly improved the quality of teaching. Most pupils now benefit from good teaching across a range of subjects and year groups, including in English and mathematics. Teachers typically use their good subject knowledge to engage pupils in challenging and interesting activities. This means that pupils are making better progress than they have in recent years. The progress which pupils make is good in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, where teaching is now consistently effective.

- Leaders are aware that the quality of teaching in science is not as routinely strong as in other subjects. Senior leaders have invested resources in order to strengthen this aspect. Recent recruitment, creative deployment of specialist staff and a personalised professional development programme for staff mean that the quality of teaching in science is improving and the weaker aspects previously seen have been reduced. However, more gaps in pupils' learning remain in science than elsewhere and there are times when pupils are set tasks which do not challenge and inspire them.
- Teachers usually use the assessment information available about pupils' learning well, to set work which matches their needs. Training has improved the attention teachers give to those who start school with high starting points. Teachers now demand more of these pupils and this is having a positive impact on their learning. Teachers more regularly provide these pupils with opportunities to grapple with complex ideas, think deeply and respond with detail and fluency.
- Teachers have high expectation of pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils typically learn with high levels of enthusiasm, take care to complete the activities that they are set and do so with care and precision. This supports their good progress. Occasionally, where pupils are set work which does not challenge them sufficiently, there are pockets of low-level disruption or some lack of attention. In these minority of cases, pupils' work is untidy and lacks accuracy.
- The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are catered for fully and effectively. Teachers, including those whom leaders employ as specialists in this aspect, focus on the promotion of pupils' skills in reading, speaking and writing. This benefits all pupils who speak English as an additional language, but has a particularly significant impact on those who are new to speaking English.
- The focus of leaders on improving the teaching of literacy has been effective. Teachers consistently recognise the need to give attention to pupils' literacy skills in all subjects. As a result, pupils speak, read and write with growing accuracy, confidence and fluency. This emerging strength has supported pupils, especially boys, to learn with at a higher level across their curriculum. A few pockets remain where teachers do not fully address pupils' misconceptions in spelling, punctuation and grammar

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and courteous. They are polite and wear their uniform with pride. Inspectors noted pupils' skill and maturity when speaking about their views of the school.
- Pupils consistently benefit from their positive interactions with one another and adults. Pupils say that they are happy at school. At break and lunchtimes, pupils confidently mix, play and pursue their own interests. School leaders and other staff pride themselves on the good relationships that they build and care that they have for the pupils. These positive relationships extend to lessons, where pupils are confident to ask questions, express views and read aloud. They listen to others politely. On those rare occasions where pupils' concentration wavers or there is low-level disruption, the good relationships between staff and pupils are effective in restoring pupils' positive habits.

- The pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. This includes racist and homophobic bullying. Pupils spoke with maturity and clarity about these types of bullying and are adamant that there they would not be tolerated at the school. Bullying records show that incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from the risks of exploitation, including when using social media.
- Pupils said that staff are approachable and unwaveringly considerate of pupils' emotional and physical well-being. Leaders, including the chief executive officer and those responsible for governance, see these aspects as a priority. As a result, the support services provided by leaders are of a high standard, wide-ranging and meet pupils' requirements. For example, guidance is provided for pupils in Year 11 to support their mental well-being during preparation for examinations. Pupils work closely with school and catering managers to develop the range of healthy dining options provided at break and lunchtime.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils' learning secures their mature approach to relationships. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke recognise and value people's differences, other faiths and cultures. They say that they and other pupils are confident to be who they want to be. Pupils understand and uphold the rights of all. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities and role in modern Britain. Pupils from all year groups learn about, and actively participate in, the vast range of democratic opportunities available, such as pupil leadership groups and support for fair-trade initiatives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They regularly take pride in their work and learn well. There are rare occasions when pupils lose concentration or there is low-level disruption. In these cases, work is not as neat and learning is less effective.
- Pupils conduct around the school is good. They move around the school in an orderly manner at breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons. They arrive punctually at lessons. They treat the school environment with respect and do not leave litter lying around.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school. They recognise and value the good quality of education with which they are provided. As a result, they attend school regularly. Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, has increased significantly in recent years and now matches that of others nationally.
- Leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Recent examination results for pupils leaving the school have been below the national average across a range of subjects, including in mathematics and science, for boys and for the most able pupils.

- However, the recent examination results do not tell the full story of pupils' progress at the school. They are a consequence of the inadequate standard of education provided at the predecessor school, where pupils' attendance, conduct and the quality of teaching were poor. The actions taken by current leaders to improve the engagement and progress of these pupils had too little time to embed in order to enable pupils to attain the standards of which they were capable.
- Evidence in pupils' books and school's current assessment information identifies a stronger picture of pupils' progress. This is the case in all year groups, including Year 11, and across a range of subjects. The good attendance and conduct of pupils have contributed to their better progress.
- However, despite this and the good teaching which pupils now benefit from, the legacy of weak teaching means that current pupils' outcomes require improvement. Too many pupils are catching up on missed learning in order to attain the levels of which they are capable. This is especially the case in science, for some boys and for the most able pupils.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows that in English and mathematics, pupils are making far stronger progress than previously. Pupils' writing, including extended writing, in English is regularly of a higher standard than previously. In mathematics, pupils are consistently addressing more complex topics with more success than before. As a result, pupils make strong progress. However, as in other subjects, despite good teaching pupils are sometimes not working at the level of which they are capable, including those in key stage 4 and the most able. Leaders and teachers are reviewing and supplementing the curriculum to provide learning activities to overcome missing learning, but some of these pupils currently lack depth of knowledge and fluency in their learning.
- In science, the progress of pupils is not as consistently strong as in other subjects. Work in pupils' books shows an improving picture, with more attention given to pupils' scientific accuracy than previously. Older pupils have strengthened their knowledge and understanding by repeating work which was previously not taught effectively.
- Across a range of other subjects, including religious education, history and modern foreign languages pupils are making stronger progress than previously. Evidence from pupils' work shows that they work with good standards of precision and tackle challenging activities regularly and successfully.
- Boys are making stronger progress across a range of subjects, including English, than previously. Inspectors scrutinised the work of boys and found that where they are challenged and interested by the curriculum, which is typically the case, they are making strides to catch up on any missed learning. Despite these improvements, boys' progress is not securely good, particularly when their interests are not captured.
- The special educational needs coordinator takes steps to support the effective learning of pupils with SEND. The information provided for teachers about these pupils has improved recently. It is more detailed for those pupils with an EHC plan. Teachers know these pupils well and they support and challenge them to make good progress. Pupils with SEND who do not have an EHC are making better progress than previously. However, occasionally the progress of these pupils slips when teachers do not use the information provided about them effectively.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make strong progress across a range of subjects. Where appropriate, these pupils have extra literacy support to help them develop their English language skills. As a result, they are able to grasp and grapple with knowledge and ideas across the curriculum effectively and make good progress.
- Evidence from pupils' work and the assessment information of current pupils shared by leaders, shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Leaders monitor these pupils' good attendance and conduct effectively, enabling them to benefit fully from the good teaching and careers guidance at the school.
- Leaders monitor effectively the quality of education for pupils who attend alternative provision. Following the streamlining of the use of alternative provision, leaders ensure that these pupils benefit from an appropriate curriculum that prepares them for the next stage of their education.
- A high proportion of pupils move on to the courses of their choice which provide aspirational next steps in education and training once they leave the school, including those who are disadvantaged or with SEND.

School details

Unique reference number	142762
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10057906

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1021
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Owain Whittaker
Headteacher	Rebecca Smith
Telephone number	0161 681 1592
Website	northmanchester.coopacademies.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@northmanchester.coop
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in March 2016. It is part of the Co-op Academies Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is nearly twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with that of other schools.
- The proportion of girls at the school is above the national average.
- Where it is appropriate, the school uses alternative provision for some pupils. The school works with the following providers: Harpurhey Alternative Provision School and Greater Manchester Alternative Provision.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Co-op Academies Trust.
- Discussions were held with pupils from all year groups to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school’s documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, attendance, bullying and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 42 staff survey responses, 10 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and five written responses from parents to Ofsted’s free-text facility.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and scrutinised pupils’ work in a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations.

Inspection team

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Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Seneviratne	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jonathan Jones	Her Majesty’s Inspector

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