

The Co-operative Academy of Leeds

Stoney Rock Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS9 7HD

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not yet good because not enough students make better than expected progress from their starting points and their attainment remains below average by the end of Year 11.
- Teaching quality varies from class to class and so has not yet reached the point where it is good overall.
- Students' behaviour varies too much across the academy and is not yet good. In some lessons, pupils do not concentrate hard enough or are sometimes distracted.
- Leaders and managers have not yet raised achievement or improved the quality of teaching and behaviour so they are at least good.
- Subject leaders do not check on the quality of teaching or marking with equal rigour.

The school has the following strengths

- The governing body and the Director of the Trust have supported and challenged academy leaders well to make rapid improvements.
- Achievement is rising for all groups of students, gaps in achievement are narrowing and the quality of teaching is improving.
- The off-site Henry Barran Centre provides high-quality support to students whose circumstances potentially make them vulnerable.
- The good curriculum provides a wealth of exciting and stimulating experiences for all groups of students. In particular, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- The sixth form is good, with students making good progress from very low starting points and a good proportion of students pursuing their studies in higher education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 parts of lessons, of which eight were observed jointly with senior leaders. Additionally, pupils' work was looked at to check on the progress they had been making over time, students were heard reading and the lead inspector visited the off-site Henry Barran Centre.
- Meetings were held with students, senior leaders, other staff, members of the governing body and the Chief Education Officer from the Co-operative Trust.
- Inspectors analysed the 30 responses that had been submitted to the on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and 59 questionnaires from academy staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including academy improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Additional Inspector
Peter Bailey	Additional Inspector
John Paddick	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized secondary academy.
- An above-average proportion of students is eligible for the pupil premium. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- A larger proportion of students arrives or leaves the academy other than at the normal times, with the majority arriving from overseas.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs and supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Around three-quarters of the students are from minority ethnic groups and a much higher proportion speaks English as an additional language than is normally found.
- In 2013, the academy did not meet the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy opened in September 2012 under the sponsorship of the Co-operative Academies Trust.
- The Henry Barran Centre, off the academy site, provides off-site support to a small number of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching so that achievement rises further to become at least good by:
 - making sure students take a pride in their work by presenting their work as neatly as they can
 - improving the quality of students' writing, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, by making sure they are able to talk through their sentences before they commit them to writing
 - improving how teachers mark students' work by always ensuring that the advice is crystal clear and that students then go on to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers' explanations are fully understood by all abilities of students, particularly the least able or those whose first language is not English.
- Improve behaviour across the academy so it becomes at least good by:
 - ensuring that students in class always behave well, concentrate hard and that their learning is not affected by students drifting off task
 - continuing to improve attendance for all groups of students so it becomes at least close to the national average.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels further still so they become at least good by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels check rigorously on the quality of teaching and marking, especially that of new staff so that any inconsistencies are ironed out as much and as soon as possible
 - goals for disabled students and those who have special educational needs are clear and measurable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students begin in Year 7 with standards that are well below those normally found. In 2013, the Year 11 left with below average standards. Their progress was variable between subjects and there was a wide gap in progress between those who were eligible for free school meals and other students, particularly in English.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. For some, irregular attendance has affected their progress. For others, their particular needs have not been well met over time.
- There are gaps in standards between those eligible for free school meals and others. In 2013, the gap in English was equivalent to three-quarters of a GCSE grade and in mathematics, to half of a grade.
- White British and Pakistani heritage students make less progress than their Black African peers do. Students who speak English as an additional language make better progress than native English speakers.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the rates of progress students currently in the academy are making and found that it is accelerating. Moreover, the academy predicts that by the time the current Year 10 leaves the academy, they will have made good progress. Inspection evidence indicates that students in Key Stage 3 are also making faster progress.
- The achievement of the most able requires improvement, but tracking of students' progress is showing that these students are making better progress in the current Year 10 and Year 11.
- The academy's careful tracking of students' progress is leading to more equality in progress between different groups of students. In particular, the academy predicts White British students' progress to rise significantly. Inspectors saw evidence of improved rates of progress for this group of students in the lessons they visited and through looking in students' books.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is used to boost students' attainment in English and mathematics through small-group work and to support those at the early stages of speaking English. This is beginning to have a positive effect on improving students' achievement.
- Similarly, gaps in progress between those eligible for the pupil premium and others are narrowing, with the gap in English narrowing significantly. The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement, but is improving rapidly.
- Those who arrive in the academy at the early stages of speaking English make quick progress, particularly with their speaking. This enables them to settle in well and able to cope with the English demands across the curriculum. The academy has developed a good package of support to help these students mix well with their peers and break down their barriers to learning.
- These improvements have been brought about by a range of factors, which include:
 - students attending more regularly than they did previously
 - a far more effective package of support for those students who find learning challenging and
 - improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Students who access the off-site Henry Barran Centre are now making good progress. The high quality care and teaching they receive means that many are engaging well with their learning. This means they are enjoying learning and attending regularly. All the Year 11 students currently using the centre have secured work-related training in colleges or apprenticeships when they leave.
- In 2013, virtually all students were entered early for GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10. 75 per cent of students improved their grade when they retook the examination.
- In the sixth form, students make good progress from their very low starting points. For some, an extended three-year period of study helps them catch up, particularly if they speak English as an additional language. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education or training.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inspectors found that the quality of teaching is improving rapidly, and this is now having a positive effect on the achievement of Year 10 students in particular. Teaching still varies in quality. Over time, this has meant that students have not made good progress and have not reached the standards of which they are capable.
- Despite improvements in the quality of teaching, some weaknesses remain. Teachers do not always insist on well-presented work, which leads to some students not paying enough attention to writing neatly, underlining or drawing diagrams with pencils.
- Students' writing is sometimes not as good as it could be, particularly when they have not been given the opportunity to talk through their sentences beforehand to make sure they use good vocabulary, well thought-out arguments and good sentence structures. This is particularly the case with students whose first language is not English.
- Explanations are sometimes too complicated, which means that the least-able students or those whose first language is not English have trouble understanding what they need to do.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Sometimes the advice given to students is vague and students do not always revisit the work to ensure that they make improvements as a result of reading teachers' comments.
- In English, significant improvements are afoot. Some marking is very high quality, with students now being given very precise steps of what they need to do to improve. Students then improve their work which shows they make rapid gains in their learning and do not repeat simple errors, such as spelling and punctuation. However, not all marking in English is yet of this high quality.
- In English students demonstrated they had made good progress over time by describing the relationships between characters in Macbeth. New learning was extended by ensuring that the students knew quotations from the text and they used these well to illustrate their answers.
- Mathematics teaching has improved as a result of more stable staffing and an emphasis on giving close support to students who need it the most. The mathematics department keeps a careful record of which students are at risk of not making enough progress and quickly injects a package of support so they do not slip behind.
- The academy has overhauled its use of classroom assistants with a team of 'para-professionals'. These are well-trained adults who are now providing a good level of support to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly for those in the early stages of learning English and those with special educational needs.
- Inspectors found that some of the most-able students receive more demanding work which is enabling them to reach higher standards. However, this is not yet consistent across the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- In classrooms, behaviour varies too much. Occasionally students' learning suffers because teachers have to spend time dealing with behaviour problems. Students' attitudes to learning are not always as good as they might be, with students sometimes chatting with each other when they should be working.
- Attendance has improved. In 2013, attendance of some groups of students, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs was below that of others. This is becoming more even between groups, although overall, attendance remains below the national average.
- In the corridors at lunchtimes and break times, behaviour in the academy is quite orderly, although occasionally students drop litter or use bad language.
- The academy keeps a careful record of behaviour over time. This shows that bad behaviour is far less common than it was and continues to reduce. Despite these improvements, the academy is well aware that senior staff need to be highly visible around the academy to ensure that these improvements are sustained.

- A particular strength is provision for students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students have ample opportunities to take part in arts activities, including public performances. Many sixth-formers do voluntary work with such organisations as the Women’s Royal Voluntary Service and MenCap.
- The academy’s work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students feel safe and secure in the academy and say that while bullying does occasionally happen, it is rare and dealt with effectively by staff. Their awareness of how to stay safe on the Internet and when using mobile phones is good. Several students spoke proudly to inspectors about how much their behaviour had improved and how as a result they felt happier.
- Parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) are happy about the levels of safety and quality of behaviour in the academy. However, some staff feel more could be done to improve behaviour further still. Others feel it has improved significantly over the past year.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management at all levels are not yet good. This is because, despite improvements seen by inspectors, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Moreover, behaviour is not yet good enough.
- Subject leaders and senior leaders check on the quality of teaching and marking. However, this sometimes lacks the necessary rigour to ensure that all teachers within a department, particularly new staff, are sharing good practice, learning from each other and that the quality of their teaching is all good.
- In some departments, weak leadership in the past has meant that teaching quality lagged behind that of other departments. In some cases, students were following courses that did not enable them to make as much progress as they could. While these issues have now been addressed, it is still too early for teaching in these subjects to improve to good.
- The curriculum has improved. For disabled students and those who have special educational needs, all now receive a good range of support for their particular needs. Similarly, the curriculum for students new to the academy from overseas ensures that they pick up essential language skills early. The curriculum in the sixth form is broad and balanced.
- Leaders and managers have developed an ethos of mutual understanding across the school. Students from different backgrounds and cultures understand each other’s differences and mix well together.
- The use of data has improved to ensure that students receive work that better challenges them. Data are also used more effectively by leaders to identify students who fall behind and take prompt action. However, the goals that are set for disabled students and those who have special educational needs are not as specific, clear or measurable as they could be.
- The academy meets current requirements for safeguarding.
- The academy receives high quality support from the Director of the Trust and external consultants. This support helps academy leaders to have an accurate and honest view of the academy’s strengths and what it needs to do to improve teaching and raise achievement. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and detailed, as are the academy development plans.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have an accurate picture of what is now needed to ensure that the quality of teaching and achievement rise to become good. They have the skills to analyse achievement data well to compare how well things are going against national averages and therefore constantly challenge academy leaders. The governing body oversees the management of teachers’ performance rigorously and it has taken decisive steps to eliminate any inadequate teaching in the academy. The governing body oversees the management of teachers’ performance well, ensuring there is a close link between teachers’ pay and their teaching ability. Finances are managed well and the academy keeps a watchful eye on spending of the pupil premium to ensure that gaps in achievement between those who are eligible for the funding and other students narrows over time.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137065
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	425693

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	984
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Briddon
Principal	Eileen McCarthy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0113 380 7940
Fax number	0113 248 5265
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