



QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

**Multi Academy Trust CEIAG Case Study:
Co-op Academies Trust**

The Trust

Co-op Academies Trust has 30 academies: 12 secondaries including 1 special school, 1 College and 16 primary schools including 2 special schools – comprising over 17000 pupils, 2500 staff and 300 governors.

The academies are based in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Staffordshire, and West Yorkshire. The Trust plans to take on additional academies each year and reach a total of 40 academies in the next 18 months.

The Trust is committed to the same co-operative values and principles as co-operatives around the world. The Trust expects all of its academies and colleagues to have these at the core of their work. Through these values they strive to ensure children, young people and their families and staff at all levels in the Trust develop:

- **Self-help** – so that we can help ourselves to improve and make a positive contribution to society
- **Self-responsibility** – so that we take responsibility for, and answer to our actions
- **Democracy** – through having a say in how we run our Trust and the academies
- **Equality** – through ensuring that the voice of each individual can be heard
- **Equity** – a fair and unbiased community
- **Solidarity** – through sharing interests and common purposes for the benefit of all.

The Trust, including each academy, is expected to work to the co-operative ethical values of:

- **Openness** – we believe in being open and sharing information and ideas to raise the outcomes of children and young people and improve their life chances
- **Honesty** – we act in a professional and respectful manner in our dealings with everyone
- **Social responsibility** – we maximise our impact on those in our communities while minimising our footprint on the world
- **Caring for others** – we treat everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves, understanding that children and young people have one childhood.

Like their sponsor Co-op, Co-op Academies Trust is about creating a workplace and learning environment that celebrates difference – where colleagues and students feel responsible, valued, empowered, and trusted to do the right thing for each other. The four Ways of being Co-op guide that. They are:

- **Do what matters most**
- **Be yourself always**
- **Show you care**
- **Succeed together**

All Academies promote the co-operative values and incorporate the Co-op Ways of Being into everything that they do, including their curriculum.

Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Since the appointment of the Director of CEIAG, Jo Sykes, the Trust has worked in partnership with the *C+K Careers* Licensed Awarding Body to support the academies in their journey to achieve the national quality award: **The Quality in Careers Standard**. Leading up to the initial meeting with C+K all academies received high quality CPD and information sharing to ensure they were fully aware of the expectations, assessment criteria and procedures involved.

The Trust's aim is for each of its academies to hold the national quality award by July 2024. They are proud that currently, eight of the secondary academies and its one college were awarded the **Quality in Careers Standard** in 2021-22, with the rest due to start the process of accreditation in academic year 2022-23. Eight of its primaries are working towards the C+K quality award for careers education which is "nationally endorsed" by the Quality in Careers Consortium in 2022-23 with the further eight due to begin in 2023-24.

Across the various assessments for the national **Quality in Careers Standard**, the assessors have commented:

Co-op Academy, Walkden

'The Co-op Career Development Hub is a new platform with information, resources including an interview simulator and aptitude test and enables learners to save their CV. This is currently being used by Careers Leaders to share good practice but will soon be rolled out to pupils.'

'The school provides a high profile and focus on careers education, information, advice, and guidance (CEIAG). It is highly valued with excellent provision. There is a whole school and community approach. There are two link Governors who agree on strategic aims and measure impact against the academy development plan. Meetings are scheduled where the Governors challenge progress and gain a deeper understanding of support needed and thus enabling all key stakeholders to keep up to date with developments.'

Connell Co-op College

'There is an excellent, very detailed strategic plan for CEIAG which is RAG rated according to each Gatsby Benchmark. CEIAG also forms part of the college QIP which makes it clear that every subject has strong CEIAG links as well as targets for personal development.'

The focus on impact is commendable. Impact is measured by destinations, reduction in NEET, student feedback, progress/attainment, behaviour, attitude, progress of vulnerable groups e.g. SEND, employer engagement, and the development of employability skills.'

Co-op Academy, North Manchester

'Careers and raising aspirations are high on the agenda at Co-op Academy North Manchester and the Mission of the academy helps to embed this and promote a whole school responsibility. CEIAG is a key part of personal development in the Academy Annual Development Plan.'

'There is a core offer from the Co-op Trust which includes employability skills, Dragon's Den, Virtual work experience, Career Insights events, and apprenticeship workshops.'

Careers teams in each academy have access to Trust-wide collaboration, and they meet at least termly to share best practice and opportunities to develop new initiatives. This allows them to explore areas for growth and promote training and development opportunities. In addition, all academies are part of their local Careers Hub to ensure access to local employers and employees as well as funding streams.

Co-op offers access to business expertise and many learning opportunities for the children and young people underpinned by Co-op values. Over the last 3 years they have developed a unique *Co-op Young Business Leaders* program which offers a substantive work placement as part of the triple BTEC Business pathway. The opportunity is available to Year 13 students, with the placement running alongside the course.

With the support of Co-op, all Co-op Academies offer outstanding enrichment opportunities for their pupils, helping them to make informed and incisive decisions throughout - and beyond - their school life. Using the Gatsby Benchmarks as a framework for best practice they endeavour to have CEIAG programs that meet the needs of an ever-changing cohort of pupils and ever-changing economic landscape. Their programs inspire, raise aspirations, increase social mobility, and give their pupils an optimistic outlook on life and their place in the world of work.

The Trust's CEIAG portal allows information sharing to be easily accessed. Key information is shared such as Trust templates for the Provider Access Policy, CEIAG Programs and KS3 CEIAG PSHE resources.

Termly network meetings also allow Careers teams to share best practice and collaborate on developing their outstanding programs. Co-op has also given access to all KS4 /5 students to their Careers Hub platform which supports CV writing, applications et al. Destination data is collected 3 times per year, 2 x intended and 1 actual in line with the Trust's Destination Framework. CEIAG outcomes are shared annually with the Trust's SLT and Trustees. All link governors in primary and secondary receive termly CPD to ensure alignment between expectations at Trust and national level.

Measuring the impact

To measure impact the Trust collects Y11 / 13 destination data at various points throughout the year. This allows the Trust to have an accurate overview over time, and for academies to evaluate their program in line with students' post 16 / 18 pathways.

The Academies use Compass+ as a self-assessment tool to track progress across the Gatsby Benchmarks. Since September 2022 academies have been using the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) to ensure they are aware of their students' aspirations and give students the opportunity to reflect on their career-related knowledge and skills.

Annual Trust CEIAG audits are conducted across primary and secondary academies resulting in a focused Improvement Plan highlighting areas for development.

The Strategic Careers Lead for the Trust, Jo Sykes, concludes:

“As a Trust, CEIAG is a key part of our 3 year strategic plan, and I am keen to be the first large MAT to have all academies meeting the Quality in Careers Standard to reflect our outstanding practice.

Gaining the Standard is by no means an easy feat and there was some trepidation from our Career Leads. However, the process with C+K, from start to finish, was highly professional and strategic whilst maintaining a personal touch. Pre-assessment meetings were thorough and concise, so our CLs knew exactly how to map their evidence against the criteria.

I am delighted that the majority of our secondary academies and our college have been successful in gaining the Standard and I look forward to our primary academies and SEND academy coming on board over the next 2 years.”

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