



QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

Multi Academy Trust
Primary School CEIAG Case Study:
Co-op Academies Trust

The Trust

Co-op Academies Trust has 32 academies: 11 secondaries, 1 College, 17 primary schools and 3 special schools.

The academies are based in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Staffordshire, and West Yorkshire.

The Trust is committed to the same co-operative values and principles as cooperatives 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:

- *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)

Director of CEIAG, Jo Sykes, has developed a consistent approach to raising standards in careers education across the trust and in 2023, 8 of the trust’s primary academies have achieved the [C+K Primary Award for Careers Education](#) which is “nationally endorsed” by the [Quality in Careers Consortium](#), with a ninth receiving re-accreditation.

The Trust’s aim is for each of its academies to hold the national quality award. They are proud that currently, nine of the secondary academies and its one college have been awarded the [Quality in Careers Standard](#), with the rest due to start the process of accreditation in academic year 2023-24, along with the remaining primary academies.

Across the various assessments for the C+K Primary Award, some common themes have emerged:

Annual Trust CEIAG audits are conducted across primary academies resulting in a focused Improvement Plan highlighting areas for development. This has been successful in driving up quality and ensuring consistency across the trust, as well as linking to whole school priorities. In addition, all academies have a CRL policy and programme in place and available on their websites, which outlines the range of provision from EYFS to Key Stage 2.

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 has been a real strength in allowing them to explore areas for growth and promote training and development opportunities.

Primary Academies seek out local employers and entrepreneurs to complement the curriculum where appropriate and provide all pupils with positive role models. Indeed, many of these employer/employees are alumni of the academies and this really resonates with the pupils.

Skills Builder has been used across the trust and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The children spoken to during various assessments had a good understanding of their own skills and how they could be developed further. Understanding of stereotypes has improved throughout the journey and it was clear that experiencing and learning about STEM roles had made an impact

on children and allowed them to see the wide range of opportunities out there for them.

Aspirations surveys have been carried out across the academies with results so far showing that the range of careers children were aspiring to has increased significantly. Pupils' aspirations are displayed around the academies to ensure high visibility and celebration of the breadth of their understanding of different sectors.

One of the academies is monitoring longer term impact by undertaking surveys with ex-pupils who are now year 9 and 10 pupils in secondary academies.

Assessor comments have included:

Co-op Academy Glebe

'Children at Co-op Academy Glebe have had exposure to the world of work in many forms, on a local, national and global level.

Themed days and weeks are planned into the academic year including a high profile careers week, alongside extensive enterprise opportunities such as Christmas Craft and ice cream sales. The Art Exhibition is a lovely example, whereby each child has created some artwork which is then framed by a local company and displayed professionally in the hall for their parents/careers to view and purchase.

The school has a robust evaluation process: evidence of student interactions with employers and aspirational work they complete is recorded by class teachers and the children will have opportunities to reflect on each experience.

The school is now gathering feedback from alumni who are in years 9 and 10 as to the impact of their careers programme in primary school. This is excellent practice and a great way of seeking impact measurement.'

Co-op Academy Parkland

'Skills builder has been very effective and the children spoken to in the focus groups had a good understanding of their own skills and how these could be developed further.

Display boards showing 'local heroes' (alumni) were very powerful.

The Co-op are a good source of support for employer engagement activity and resources, and the school is very proactive in linking to the world of work and engaging with employers from a range of industries via staff and governor links, and even getting tradespeople working in the school to present to children about their job roles.'

Co-op Academy Woodlands

'During careers week, learners took part in a dragon's den style activity where they took on job roles such as researcher and marketing manager, applied for roles in school (SLT, teaching assistant), and had mock interviews. Pupils also learnt about the range of pathways post-16 and

visited PWC's offices. This was excellent for building cultural capital and simulating real recruitment processes.

There are some good initiatives around parental engagement. A careers event held in school in January featured input from Luminate Education Group who spoke about the programmes they offer. The event received good feedback and resulted in 8 parents signing up for courses.'

Co-op Academy Friarswood

Employer engagement is strong at Co-op Academy Friarswood. One impactful example is that of 'farmer John' who has used Sykpe to give reception children an insight into the life and job role of a farmer. His talks have been weekly, and pupils even got to see him preparing for his wedding! In addition to this, speakers have included a forensic scientist, the secret service, firefighters, landscape architect and accountant. Primary Futures have been used well to support this.

CRL was recognized and highlighted as part of the school's recent Ofsted visit (June 2023) where specific reference was made to careers: *'Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They ensure that pupils understand the career opportunities which are available to them in later life. There are many planned visits to school, including a range of adults from occupations, such as artists, barristers, paramedics, marine biologists and florists. These visits are planned for each year group, starting from the early years.'*

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

'I am incredibly proud of how CRL has been embraced across our academies. I am fortunate that I am working with a group of fantastic CRL colleagues that have taken on board and driven the CRL agenda with such enthusiasm and passion.'

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(p) Quality in Careers

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