



QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

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

## The Trust

As of June 2026 Co-op Academies Trust comprises 38 academies: 12 secondaries, 4 special, 1 College and 21 primaries serving approximately 21,000 pupils. 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 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 Coop 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)**

For the last 2 years the Trust has have worked in partnership with Career Connect, the first careers organisation in the country to achieve Licensed Awarding Body status for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#). Career Connect offers all the Trust's academies a dedicated experienced assessor who provides:-

- support in building a portfolio of evidence in line with the Standard's requirements,
- support to identify any gaps and share good practice
- signposting to funded opportunities
- annual reviews

This is to ensure all Career Leads are fully aware of the expectations, assessment criteria and procedures involved.

All academies within the Trust are either working towards or have achieved the [Quality in Careers Standard](#), with many of them, after 3 years, renewing their accreditation via reassessment.

Across the various assessments for the national [Quality in Careers Standard](#), the assessors have commented:

#### **Bebington**

*"The commitment and enthusiasm of the Careers Team at Co-op Academy Bebington were evident throughout the assessment. There is a clear focus on providing a high-quality, aspirational CEIAG programme that meets the needs of all students. Strengths were identified in the personalised support provided to learners, the integration of careers across the curriculum, and the breadth of employer and post-16/HE engagement. Documentary evidence, student and parent feedback, and partner testimonials all support the impact of the Careers programme, demonstrating that the Academy consistently meets the Gatsby Benchmarks. The Careers Team work effectively together and are fully committed to providing the best possible support for their students. In addition the pastoral support and commitment to learners' futures shines through, the Academy has a clear focus on raising the aspirations of the students to enable them to make well informed and realistic decisions for their futures."*

#### **Leeds**

*"The Assessor identified several outstanding strengths in both the strategic planning and delivery of CEIAG across the Academy and partnership working, providing bespoke support for learners, innovative examples of involving parents and NEET prevention work The Careers Lead/Sen VP,*

*CEIAG Coordinator and the wider Personal Development Team work effectively together and are fully committed to providing the best possible support for learners. The on-going support and dedication of Governors adds to this. Recording processes for individual students and the level of support they are provided with is second to none.*

*The dedication and support of the Careers Team has developed seamlessly into the cross curricular careers support offered throughout the Academy. Whilst the Department Ambassadors model is excellent, all staff are focused on raising the aspirations of the students to enable them to make well informed and realistic decisions for their futures. This has been achieved through the hard work and commitment of the Careers department and their deliberate integration with other departments.”*

Career 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.

The Co-op offers access to business expertise and many learning and enrichment opportunities for Co-op Academy students which are underpinned by Co-op values. Over the last 6 years they have developed a unique Co-op Young Business Leaders program which offers a substantive work placement supported by senior leaders 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 and students, helping them to make informed and incisive decisions throughout - and beyond - their school life.

Using the Gatsby Benchmarks as a framework for best practice and using ‘equalex’ learning outcomes they endeavour to have CEIAG programs that are progressive both and sequential and meet the needs of an ever-changing cohort of pupils and everchanging economic landscape. Their programs inspire, raise aspirations, increase social mobility, and give their pupils an optimistic outlook on life and their potential place in the world of work.

The Trust's Career portal allows information sharing to be easily accessed. Key information is shared such as Trust templates for the Provider Access Policy, CEIAG Programs and the new ‘equalex’ framework. The Trust has a 3 year strategic planning document outlining priorities with SMART targets. Aligned to this each academy also has a Careers 3 year strategic plan. Career outcomes are shared annually with the Trust’s SLT, Trustees and the governance team . All career link governors in primary and secondary receive termly CPD / support 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+ / Unifrog as a self-assessment tool to track progress across the Gatsby Benchmarks. The Trust has a 3 year partnership with Unifrog to ensure students can start to manage and own their career journey. Academies also use 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. Analysis of this leads to high quality impact evaluation that in turn develops their Career offers.

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

*"As a Trust, CEIAG is a key part of our 5 year strategic plan, and we are ambitious in our drive to continue offering high quality Career provision from EYFS through to 13.*

*We have a clear expectation that all academies joining the Trust have a 2 year period to gain the Quality in Careers Standard.*

*Gaining the Standard is by no means an easy feat and the process of evidence gathering is robust, demanding and thorough.*

*However, the ongoing support from Career Connect is highly professional and strategic whilst maintaining a personal touch. Pre-assessment meetings are thorough and concise, so our CLs knew exactly how to map their evidence against the criteria.*

*I am delighted that the overwhelming majority of our academies have been successful in gaining the Standard and those new to the Trust are currently working towards it."*

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

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***(p) Quality in Careers***

***July 2026 update***