

Inspection of Co-op Academy New Islington

10 Hugh Oldham Way, New Islington Marina, Ancoats, Manchester, Greater Manchester M4 6EY

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Joshua Berry. This school is part of The Co-operative Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Chris Tomlinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Russell Gill.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Co-op Academy New Islington under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged New Islington Free School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Co-op Academy New Islington as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They value the strong relationships that they have with adults. They feel assured that they will be well supported should they have any concerns.

Around school, pupils are confident. They are celebrated as individuals, who are free to express their unique personalities. The atmosphere is one of happiness, inclusivity and vibrancy. Pupils are polite and considerate of others. They are respectful of each other's opinions and beliefs.

Pupils thrive on learning, both in the classroom and through the purposefully organised learning areas. They are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their time in school. Many pupils meet the school's high expectations for their achievement.

Older pupils act as mature and helpful role models for younger pupils. Children in the early years quickly learn to follow rules and routines. They play together joyfully.

Pupils enjoy participating in the numerous clubs and activities that the school offers to support their learning beyond the academic curriculum. Clubs such as chess, football and choir enable pupils to develop their talents and interests. The school helps pupils to become active citizens in their community through projects, such as planting flowers in the city.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has put in place a clear and ambitious curriculum, which starts in the early years. The curriculum sets out the important information that pupils will learn progressively to help them to build a secure body of knowledge over time.

The school is mindful that some pupils join after the Reception Year. As such, it has crafted the curriculum to connect knowledge and to enable pupils to recap or learn previous information before new learning is introduced. Staff check pupils' understanding and address any subject-specific gaps that they might have.

In 2024, the provisional published outcomes for writing were significantly below the national average. The school recognised the reasons behind this and swiftly implemented a revised approach to writing. However, sometimes the feedback that staff provide to pupils does not have the intended impact. Occasionally, errors in pupils' writing, such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting, are overlooked. This means that a small number of pupils, and children in the early years, carry gaps in their basic knowledge of writing over time.

Reading takes a high priority across school. From the start of the Reception Year, children are taught the phonics code. They read from books that match the sounds that they know. As they grow older, pupils continue to read from books which match their reading knowledge.

In the main, phonics is taught with consistency and fidelity to the school's chosen programme. Pupils who do not keep up with the pace of the learning receive the support that they need to catch up. On occasion though, the approaches that staff use to support learners vary in accuracy, meaning that sometimes pupils do not learn as securely as they could. This is also the case for a small number of pupils with SEND. Very occasionally, staff do not have a secure knowledge of how to adapt the learning for pupils with SEND, which can hinder some pupils' progress through the curriculum. Nevertheless, the school quickly and effectively identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff meet pupils' needs through their use of compassionate, reflective and purposeful language. Overall, pupils are helped to achieve well.

Throughout the school, pupils, including children in the early years, are cooperative and friendly towards others. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know and follow the school rules, conducting themselves maturely and sensibly.

The school offers pupils a broad range of opportunities to enhance their personal development. It has developed a thoughtfully implemented approach to teach pupils about transferrable skills and to encourage them to have high aspirations for their future. The outdoor learning provision closely links curricular learning with enhanced opportunities to learn about nature. For example, pupils made bird feeders and learned about different types of birds and their food sources. The outdoor provision also supports pupils' understanding about key skills, such as resilience and responsibility. Many pupils benefit from taking part in a wide variety of trips and visits to help them to learn through experience.

The school implements a range of strategies to support staff's well-being. Staff appreciate the consideration that is given to minimise the impact on their workload when changes are introduced. Members of the trust and the local governing body are effective in their roles by ensuring that the school's actions are purposeful and matched to its current priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the approaches that staff use to support pupils' learning are not as effective as they could be. This means that some pupils, for example those at the early stages of reading and pupils with SEND, are not helped to learn as best they could. The school should develop staff expertise to ensure that staff have the requisite knowledge to consistently and effectively support learners.

- Sometimes, the feedback that staff provide does not have the impact that the school intends. This means that a small number of pupils continue to carry gaps in their foundational knowledge, particularly around transcription. The school should ensure that the feedback that staff provide to pupils addresses errors in foundational knowledge to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139598
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10348286
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Russell Gill
CEO of the trust	Chris Tomlinson
Headteacher	Joshua Berry
Website	newislington.coopacademies.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 June 2015 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of The Co-operative Academies Trust.
- The headteacher took up the role in the summer term 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils’ work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They spoke with pupils, looked at documentation and reviewed pupils’ work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with the CEO and regional director for the school. She also spoke with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke with other senior leaders in the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils’ personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils’ welfare and education. They observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- No pupils completed Ofsted’s online survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke with pupils during meetings, lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector also spoke with some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Jen Ashworth

Ofsted Inspector

Tracy Beaty

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025