



Co-op Academy
Belle Vue

Community Engagement Plan 2023 - 2024

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Introduction

Belle Vue's community engagement plan has been developed in collaboration with our local community. Throughout the previous academic year, we actively engaged with key stakeholders, seeking their input for our community plan. These stakeholders include local councillors, authorities, community groups, businesses, feeder primary schools, residents, and Co-op Academy Belle Vue students and their families. Our engagement included visits to community groups, attendance at committee meetings, and hosting forums to facilitate open discussions about our community.

Each year, we distribute a survey to Belle Vue families. This survey delves into questions about our local community, ensuring that our community engagement plan accurately reflects the needs of our community. The survey results also serve as a gauge for the success of our community plan, enabling us to monitor its effectiveness.

In developing our community engagement plan, we leveraged the insights provided by the Co-op's Wellbeing Index. This Index provides a glimpse into what's important to people in a local community, drawing on data from over 28,000 communities across the UK to assess their scores on various wellbeing measures. We specifically analysed the findings for Longsight, Gorton, and Openshaw after examining data regarding the residence of our students.

Using a combination of our experiences, the qualitative and quantitative data we collected from community stakeholders and the findings of Co-op's Wellbeing Index, we created priorities for Co-op Academy Belle Vue's community engagement plan. All of the projects and events proposed or delivered in our community engagement plan align with the priorities we have set. This approach is intended to ensure that our community engagement remains manageable and focused on providing the necessary support to our communities.

We recognise that the priorities in our community engagement plan may evolve to respond to a changing world. As we continue to grow, we commit to completing an annual report to assess any changes in the communities we serve and to determine if the Co-op Wellbeing Index undergoes any changes.

Priorities

The Cost of Living Crisis

We aim to address the challenges of the current cost-of-living crisis in our local communities through projects such as:

Community Grocers and Community Fridge

Facilitated by The Jesuscina Foundation and hosted weekly on Mondays in Co-op Academy Belle Vue's Community Hub, this initiative provides vital support for our local community in supplying food.

The Community Grocers offer 10 essential items at the cost of £2, sourced from FareShare. We have assisted The Jesuscina Foundation in securing a funding grant, enabling them to acquire a FareShare membership and provide our community with essential cooking items. For community members facing financial constraints, the £2 donation requirement is waived. These donations not only cover the fuel costs for the charity's trustees, who travel to collect and stock the fridge, but also contribute to purchasing additional items like eggs and oil.

The Community Fridge offers good-quality, fresh food nearing its use-by and best-before dates, preventing unnecessary wastage. Visitors are encouraged to take as many items as they need.

This project operates year-round, providing a continuous and reliable stream of support. Additionally, it aligns with our Environment & Sustainability priorities.

Bike Library

Bike Libraries are local hubs that will allow people to borrow a bicycle, like a book, to try out. They aim to boost access to cycles and give people a chance to give cycling a go.

In collaboration with Transport for Greater Manchester, we have secured a funding grant of £5,000 to establish our bike library. The bicycles are housed in our school, available for borrowing for durations ranging from one day to one month. The official launch of our bike library is scheduled for January.

We are proud to offer a diverse selection of bikes, catering to various needs, including adult, junior, male, and female categories. The range encompasses Road, Hybrid, and Mountain bikes. As part of our commitment to sustainability, some of these bikes will be pre-loved. All our suppliers are Manchester-based, independent suppliers, emphasising our support for our local community.

To support the bike library launch, Belle Vue's students will be actively participating in TfGM's 'Expanding the Reach' project, enabling them to contribute to the maintenance of the bikes.

This project operates year-round, providing a continuous and reliable stream of support. Additionally, it aligns with our Environment & Sustainability priorities.

Ending Period Poverty

In addition to offering products within the school premises, we will provide sanitary products for students to take home, particularly if they lack access to products at home or their families could benefit from extra support. Students can collect a brown paper bag containing these products from our school office.

This project is designed to operate throughout the year, providing a continuous and reliable stream of support.

Voice and Participation

We aim to connect our families with local community groups and support services, responding to survey feedback from 2022-2023. Our families expressed a need for support already available in the community. Instead of duplicating existing offerings, our goal is to promote and amplify the support provided by local community groups. This priority is also to ensure that we give our families a voice in our academy so they are part of our community.

Projects that fall into this category include:

Family Forums

Every half term, the Strategic Leadership Team will host a family forum, inviting Belle Vue families to our academy to provide updates and gather feedback.

Community Newsletters

Students in our Community CARE elective create a newsletter to promote support services and local community events to our families. This is sent home at the end of each term.

The electronic version will be available in our academy's top spoken home languages: English, Urdu, Arabic, Yoruba, and Bengali.

Environment and Sustainability

In light of the climate crisis, we prioritise our environment and actively work to support a safe and clean local community. We are committed to educating our students about the importance of sustainability and maintaining a clean environment through various projects. We will collaborate with community partners wherever possible.

Eco-schools

We are starting our Eco-schools journey in 2024. Following the launch of our Eco-committee, we will be attending Co-op's Eco-conference before our committee works towards our Green Flag accreditation through various eco-projects based on the environmental needs of our academy.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Our students have identified littering as one of the primary challenges in our community. Collaborating with Biffa, our students have gained an understanding of the importance of recycling and disposing of waste correctly. As part of the Community CARE elective, they are soon to introduce a new recycling system in our academy.

As part of the Great British Spring Clean, our Eco-committee will organise a community litter pick, collaborating with Keep Manchester Tidy and other local community groups.

Field to Fork

As part of the Great Big Green Week 2024 (8th to 16th June 2024), students will cultivate plants, gaining insights into growth stages and understanding the connection between homegrown food and meals. This hands-on project nurtures horticultural skills, promotes sustainability awareness, and encourages healthy eating habits. The project is being conducted as part of the Gardening and Horticulture elective.

Primary School Engagement

We aim to build relationships with local feeder schools through various outreach activities, which will be delivered and designed by Belle Vue's Co-op Young Leaders. We will work closely with our local feeders to create a bespoke package of support for their Year 5 pupils.

To kick off our initiatives, we organised a competition in September 2023, inviting Year 5 pupils from our local community to draw a picture demonstrating our CARE principle - community. The competition sheets, along with open evening posters and flyers, were distributed to 15 local feeder schools.

Other Events

Challenge Poverty Week

During Challenge Poverty Week, we celebrated the strength of our community. In collaboration with Great Places Housing and Northmoor Community Centre, we provided a free hot meal at Northmoor's Community Diner. Local community groups, including Manchester City Council, Heart and Parcel, Longsight Art Space, Longsight Women's Writing Club, Enterprising Habits, and Biffa attended to showcase their support services. We took the opportunity to promote our food projects and the upcoming Bike Library.

Christmas Choir

On 7th December, The Belle Vue Choir visited [Gorton Parks Care Home](#) to sing Christmas songs for the residents.

Time to Talk Day

On 1 February 2024, Time to Talk Day focuses on creating supportive communities through conversations about mental health, run by [Mind](#) and [Rethink Mental Illness](#) in partnership with Co-op. On this day, Community Lunch and Thoughtful Thursdays encouraged our students to discuss their mental health. It was an honour to be joined by Co-op's Operations Board to discuss ways we can look after our mental health.

Clothes Collection

We encourage our staff to donate any pre-loved items of clothing, shoes, and bags to a local community group, [The Oasis Centre](#). To facilitate donations, we have a collection point in our academy.

Evaluation and Monitoring

As a new academy, we will evaluate the projects and events outlined in this community engagement plan to determine their success and inclusion next year's plan.

We will conduct student satisfaction surveys and focus groups with both students, families and our local community stakeholders.

Our annual survey includes the following question:

Do you think Co-op Academy Belle Vue supports our local community?

This question helps us assess the impact we make to our community each year.
