

Leigh Academy Bexley

Address: Avenue Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 3BN

Unique reference number (URN): 149898

Inspection report: 12 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have built an inclusive community, where pupils feel a real sense of belonging. When pupils join the school, highly effective arrangements for their transition and induction mean that leaders know pupils and their individual needs very well. Leaders and staff identify any needs accurately, using a range of assessments to ensure support is appropriate for each pupil's individual circumstances. Staff receive comprehensive and helpful information about the individual needs of pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those pupils who are known (or previously known) to social care.

Leaders make sure that staff have access to high-quality training and make adaptations and reasonable adjustments that enable all pupils to experience success at school. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils with more complex needs receive the right help. For example, close collaboration with experts in autism ensures that the needs of pupils in the new specially resourced provision are very well catered for.

Alternative provision is used appropriately and in liaison with the local authority. Leaders make sure that pupil premium funding is targeted effectively and monitored continuously. All pupils are included in the wider school community and access a wide range of experiences and opportunities. The school's strong inclusive culture helps pupils to feel valued and able to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They are determined to ensure that pupils receive an education that enhances both their academic and personal growth. The new trust and school leaders identified what needed improvement and successfully prioritised the most urgent areas. Their actions are resulting in rapid progress in all areas of the school's work. Leaders are outward looking. They seek guidance and support from a range of places, including within the trust, or by working with external sources. As a result of leaders' work, the school is improving quickly.

Leaders understand the community the school serves and the barriers that some pupils face in their engagement with school. The school's systems and strategies to provide both academic and pastoral support are well developed. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a purposeful education that prepares them well for future pathways. They engage constructively with parents and carers. Pupils, parents and staff share leaders' vision for the school, including their high aspirations for all pupils. Trust leaders and the local governing board know the school very well. They challenge and support leaders effectively. For example, they are actively involved in the school, working with leaders to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the support they need to succeed.

Staff, including those in the early stages of their career, benefit from high-quality professional learning. Teachers appreciate the range of development opportunities available to them so that they are more effective in their roles and can use their training to impact positively on pupils' experiences. Staff are proud to work at the school. They are committed

to improving the school further and appreciate how leaders support them with workload and wellbeing.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Over time, pupils' attainment and progress in GCSE examinations at the end of key stage 4 have been low. Improved teaching is now making a positive difference. The new leadership team has ensured that there are consistent teaching approaches in place, as well as a new, ambitious curriculum. Pupils now benefit from a structure that enables them to build knowledge progressively and apply it in their work with increasing confidence. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, outcomes in national examinations have risen recently. Most pupils' current work shows that this positive trend in how well pupils understand and apply learning is being sustained.

Leaders know which pupils need additional help, including those who have fallen behind with reading, writing and mathematics. For example, targeted reading programmes help younger pupils quickly develop the essential skills they need to become confident readers.

Overall, pupils, and students in the sixth form, are prepared appropriately and are increasingly ambitious as they plan their next steps.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have placed a high priority on improving pupils' attendance. They analyse attendance carefully to identify patterns and trends. This helps staff to identify pupils and families who may need additional help. Staff support pupils and their families to understand the importance of attendance. This work is effective and helps pupils to attend more frequently. Attendance is improving over time. Persistent absence remains high, but it has improved significantly in the last few years.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and during social times. Leaders have created a calm and orderly learning environment. Genuine care and firm boundaries characterise the culture in school. Pupils benefit from clear expectations and routines. Staff apply the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour with consistency. This helps pupils know what to expect. Students in the sixth form model positive behaviours with their maturity. Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour carefully. This enables them to make appropriate adaptations for pupils who may need help to manage their behaviour. Consequently, incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Leaders create a culture where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. On the rare occasions these do happen, staff deal with them effectively. Suspensions are used appropriately.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The well-designed curriculum is broad and ambitious. Recent changes to the curriculum have ensured that all staff know what pupils should learn in each subject and at every stage. The curriculum is logically sequenced and builds pupils' knowledge securely over time. Leaders monitor its impact carefully. This ensures that they have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching from Year 7 to Year 13.

Leaders ensure that teachers receive regular professional learning opportunities that help them to implement the curriculum well. These are having a positive impact and, as a result, the quality of teaching is typically high, including in the sixth form. Teachers explain new learning clearly and ensure that pupils have opportunities to revisit prior learning. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned. Teachers typically adapt learning to carefully match the needs of pupils. Pupils value the support their teachers give them and increasingly value their learning. Occasionally, pupils' understanding is not fully checked to ensure that their knowledge is secure. As a result, at times, teaching does not address gaps in pupils' learning as quickly as it could do.

The school has well-designed processes to support those pupils who arrive with gaps in their foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective additional support helps these pupils to catch up quickly.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has put in place a well-sequenced personal development programme that builds pupils' knowledge and experiences over time. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They learn about important topics, such as healthy relationships and substance misuse. Pupils also develop their understanding of fundamental British values and equality. They know to treat other people with respect, regardless of any differences they may have. Typically, lessons on these important topics are taught well. However, sometimes, teaching does not support some pupils to develop a secure and detailed understanding of some of the important elements of the school's personal development programme.

A comprehensive careers programme ensures that pupils are informed and supported when they are planning their next steps. Leaders commit to helping pupils explore their options in depth and develop a secure pathway to ambitious next steps. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive clear guidance about their next steps, supported by visits to employers or universities. This prepares pupils well for making choices about their future.

The school offers a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities that help pupils to develop their talents and interests. The school makes sure that clubs and opportunities are appealing and accessible so that all pupils benefit from the wide offer. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about trips to museums and theme parks. Pupil leadership roles, including the school council, give pupils a voice in school improvement. Leaders track participation in wider opportunities well, and more disadvantaged pupils now take part.

Pupils have a clear sense of belonging to the school, and they benefit from nurturing pastoral care. Staff provide tailored support and spaces for pupils' emotional and wellbeing needs. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, and those with additional pastoral needs, are well supported in their personal development. Pupils feel that they are well listened to by leaders. They know they can support changes and improvements in school life.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure there is a broad and ambitious post-16 programme of study that prepares students well for their next steps. Leaders regularly review the offer to ensure it meets students' needs. The curriculum is typically taught well. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver their study programmes effectively. They deliver engaging lessons, which are valued highly by students. Leaders make sure that students who need additional help to access the curriculum receive timely support. This helps to break down barriers to their learning. As a result, students make clear and sustained progress from their starting points. The published outcomes have improved over time, with students now achieving in line with the national average.

Students are well supported to realise their aspirations. They benefit from impartial careers advice and guidance, visits to universities and opportunities to engage with apprenticeship providers. Students have a detailed understanding of the range of qualifications or employment that they can consider once they complete Year 13. The majority of students go on to sustained education, employment or training. Students benefit from a range of well-designed activities that enrich their learning. This includes, for example, leadership roles and opportunities for mentoring younger pupils. Students demonstrate a sense of belonging and pride in their school and achievements.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

This is a warm and welcoming school. There have been significant improvements at the school since it joined the Leigh Academies Trust in June 2023. Pupils and staff speak about the culture shift that has happened and why they feel happy to come to school. Leaders have established a calm and orderly environment where routines help pupils settle to learning. Staff help pupils to understand what is expected of them. During lessons and at social times, pupils behave well. They follow the high expectations leaders have for their conduct. They describe behaviour as 'much better now'. Older pupils, including those in the sixth form, act as positive role models and contribute strongly to the school's caring and respectful culture. Pupils have a genuine sense of belonging, which is fostered through the school's college system as well as the emphasis placed on relationships. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, describe feeling happy, safe and proud of their school and the improvements that have been made.

Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is ambitious, carefully planned and delivered through engaging lessons. Teaching uses clear routines, modelling and retrieval to help pupils to learn well. Staff know the pupils well and there is a range of provision on offer to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning and personal development. As a result, pupils feel valued as individuals and they progress well through the curriculum. This is shown in improving

outcomes in national examinations and in the quality of pupils' written work and verbal responses.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, are well supported in their personal development. They learn about different religions, cultures and current affairs. Pupils' positive attitudes and knowledge prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Most pupils make good use of these. Older pupils benefit from highly effective work experience and careers guidance that helps them to prepare well for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they continue to drive school improvement with precision so that pupils achieve well over time and attain more highly in national examinations.
 - Leaders should strengthen routines for checking pupils' understanding so that teaching identifies and responds to gaps accurately before moving learning on.
 - Leaders should continue to work to remove barriers to regular attendance for some pupils so that the number of pupils attending regularly continues to increase.
 - Leaders should ensure that the school continues its work to strengthen the personal development programme so that all pupils build a deep and detailed understanding of the key principles and content that are taught.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Leigh 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) Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, leaders and staff, members of the community board, the CEO and the chair of the trust during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The school includes a resourced provision for 12 pupils with autism. There are currently 8 pupils on roll at this provision.

The school makes use of one alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Sam Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lucy Bruce, Ofsted Inspector

Ed Simmons, Ofsted Inspector

Alan Blount, Ofsted Inspector

Brian Oppenheim, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

888

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

2,050

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.17%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.48%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

20.16%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	26.6%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	24.8%	45.9%	Below
2022/23		45.3%	

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	35.4	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.7	45.9	Below
2022/23		46.3	

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.95	-0.03	Below
2022/23		-0.03	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	15.6%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	13.3%	25.8%	Below
2022/23		25.2%	

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	29.2	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.6	34.6	Below
2022/23		35.0	

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.23	-0.57	Below
2022/23		-0.57	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	15.6%	53.1%	-37.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	13.3%	53.1%	-39.8 pp
2022/23		52.4%	

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	29.2	50.4	-21.2

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	25.6	50.0	-24.4
2022/23		50.3	

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.23	0.16	-1.40
2022/23		0.17	

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	29.44	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	19.38	34.38	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.6	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	10.2%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.7%	8.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	33.7%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	39.5%	25.6%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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