



LEIGH
Academies Trust

Consultation Pack

Expansion of The Leigh Academy Spring 2024

Education for a better world

Leigh Academies Trust is a registered company (company no. 2336587) and an exempt charity.
Carnation Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 2SX

Introduction

Leigh Academies Trust is proposing to increase the Published Admission Number of The Leigh Academy.

This letter explains our reasons for the proposal, and how the decision-making process works. Please let us have your views and comments on the proposal by completing the consultation response form.

1 Why do we need to increase the Published Admission Number of The Leigh Academy?

Due to new housing being planned in the Dartford area it is anticipated that the population in that area will increase in the future. Therefore, Kent County Council (KCC) will need to increase the number of secondary school places in the area around the school, to manage this increase in demand. The staff and governors of The Leigh Academy have agreed to consult on a proposal to expand the school.

2 How will this expansion be carried out?

The expansion will be in four phases. In September 2023, The Leigh Academy took an increased number of students into Year 7, with 270 students in the Year 7 cohort, an increase of 30 students from the published PAN of 240. It is proposed that this new figure of 270 students remains in place for the second phase in September 2024. The third phase would again be 270 in September 2025. Finally, the school's admission number will increase to 300 for the September 2026 intake.

3 Are there plans to show how this provision will be delivered on site?

We are in the early stages of consulting on this proposal. Initial scoping of the site has shown there is sufficient space for the expansion. Plans and designs are being drawn up to show how both the existing school buildings and facilities can be improved and adapted to add to capacity as well as how a new building will fit in with the site and larger development.

The building work will be part of a separate planning consultation process and once plans have been drawn up, you will have the opportunity to comment on them. Planning and design consultants will hold a pre-planning consultation event at the school, where all stakeholders, including local residents, will have an opportunity to view the plans, ask questions and make comments. This will enable the design team to take into consideration everyone's views before submitting final plans for approval.

4 How will the school deal with any possible increased traffic and congestion?

Although many of The Leigh Academy pupils walk to school, it is possible that there may be some additional traffic generated from this proposal. We will liaise closely with KCC Highways and Dartford Borough Council to alleviate any concerns regarding road capacity.

5 How will the increase happen?

It is the intention that phases of expansion will grow year on year, rather than all at once. This has already begun in September 2023, and has been successfully managed. With the governing body agreeing that a year on year increase is feasible and will not impact on the provision of the existing students.

6 The consultation process – indicative timeline

Date	Activity
Thursday 29th February 2024	Start of Public Consultation Period lasting for four weeks.
Tuesday 12th March 2024 3.30pm - 6.00pm	Drop-in consultation event at The Leigh Academy.
Thursday 28th March 2024 by 12.00pm	Public Consultation closes. The results of the consultation will be referred to the Governing Body for consideration. A formal decision will be made and adverted to Kent County Council.
16th May 2024	Report presented to Kent County Council, Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee to agree the funding. Cabinet Member issues a decision on whether to allocate funding in principle.
Autumn 2024	Design work concludes and a final cost determined. Report presented to KCC CYPE Cabinet Committee to agree funding.
Spring 2025	Building work commences on the new building.
September 2026	Permanent expansion, taking the Published Admission Number from 240 to 300, and the new building opened.

7 How can I give my views?

There are a number of ways to let us have your views on this proposal:

You can submit comments using our online form which can be found here: [Online response form](#)

If you wish to submit comments by email or post, please send them to:

info@leighacademy.org.uk

Admissions Arrangements
The Leigh Academy
Green Street Green Road
Dartford, Kent
DA1 1QE

Comments on the admissions arrangements should be made in writing by 12.00pm on **Thursday 28th March 2024**.

8 What happens next?

A report summarising the responses received during the consultation period will be submitted to the full governing body for consideration, who will then decide whether to proceed with increasing the Published Admission Number at the school. If the governing body determine to proceed, then they will apply to the Department for Education to change the funding agreement.

Parallel to this, a report will be prepared to the Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Education who will then take a decision as to whether to proceed with the funding of the proposal.

Whether the proposal to expand The Leigh Academy goes ahead or not will also be dependent on the planning process. The proposed new buildings and facilities will be subject to separate planning requirements which will include further public consultation.

Julia Collins
Principal, The Leigh Academy