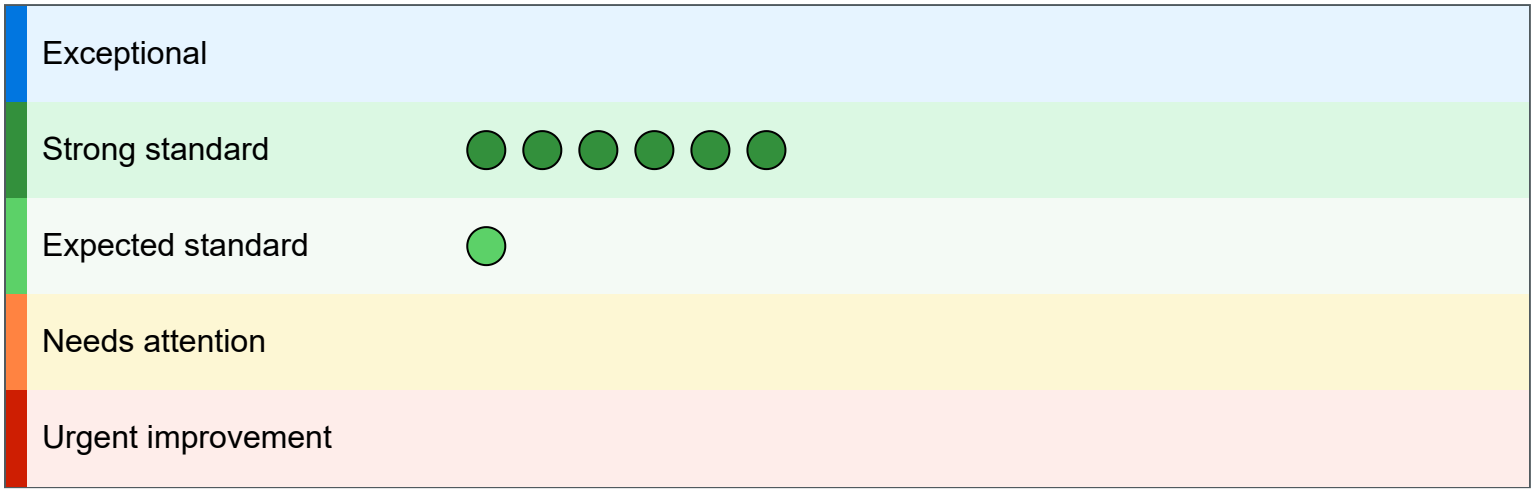
Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy

Address: Green Street Green Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1QE

Unique reference number (URN): 135297

Inspection report: 3 November 2026



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

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve very well across the curriculum. They build secure knowledge and remember what they have learned. Their work shows how they develop their understanding over time and apply their knowledge with increasing confidence. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Attainment in public examinations is typically above that achieved by pupils nationally. Pupils achieve especially well in English. Disadvantaged pupils do particularly well. More of these pupils attain grade 5 or above in both English and mathematics GCSE than disadvantaged pupils nationally. Leaders' carefully targeted support helps these pupils achieve well and develop the knowledge and skills they need for the future.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make secure progress from their starting points. Pupils who need additional help with reading and other essential skills catch up quickly. Across the school, pupils gain the knowledge and qualifications that prepare them well for further education, training or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Attendance

Leaders make regular attendance a priority. They understand the barriers that can prevent pupils from attending school and take effective action to address them. Staff monitor attendance closely and work with families to provide timely and practical support. The school's approach brings attendance and pastoral staff together so that staff spot difficulties early. This tailored support helps pupils who find attending school difficult to establish regular routines. Attendance is above the national average and continues to improve. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also attend well. Fewer pupils miss school frequently, reflecting the impact of leaders' work.

Behaviour and attitudes

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They follow clear expectations, move calmly between lessons and settle quickly to learning. Staff build warm and respectful relationships with pupils. This helps create a purposeful environment in which pupils concentrate and take pride in their work. Pupils show consideration for one another. Older pupils set a positive example for younger ones. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust adults to respond promptly to concerns about bullying or discrimination. Leaders provide thoughtful, individual support that helps pupils manage their behaviour and make positive choices. This contributes to an orderly and safe school community.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders foster an inclusive culture in which they know pupils’ individual needs and act swiftly to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing. Close links with primary schools, careful

assessments and regular discussions between pastoral and specialist staff help leaders identify emerging needs early. They check pupils' progress regularly and refine the help pupils receive so that it continues to work.

Leaders target pupil premium funding carefully. Staff understand the priorities it supports. Leaders evaluate its impact and adjust their approach when needed. Disadvantaged pupils attend regularly and achieve well, including in examinations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from individual plans and well-targeted interventions in reading, language and mathematics. Specialist provision for hearing impairment and speech, language and communication needs is particularly effective. Skilled staff prepare pupils for learning and enable them to take part in mainstream lessons alongside their peers.

Families and external professionals contribute meaningfully to decisions about pupils' education and welfare. The school works in partnership with social workers and local authority teams to support pupils known to children's social care, including those who are looked after. Staff take account of looked-after pupils' personal education plans and respond promptly when circumstances change. Where pupils attend alternative provision, leaders retain oversight of their education and wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders know the school and its community well. They set ambitious expectations and use information about learning, attendance and wellbeing to decide where their work can make the greatest difference. They act promptly on what they find. Their determined work on attendance, for example, has improved attendance and significantly reduced persistent absence. Leaders also prioritise improving teaching. Targeted coaching helps staff improve their practice and is helping teaching to become more consistent across subjects.

The school benefits from being part of a network of schools. Trust leaders provide specialist knowledge and practical support while allowing school leaders to make decisions that respond to local needs. The principal took up their post in September 2026 and has made an immediate impact with the support of the trust. Leaders value parents' views and work closely with families and community partners. They use what they learn from these relationships to guide decisions about pupils' education and welfare.

Staff speak positively about working at the school. Leaders protect time for staff to learn together and provide structured opportunities for them to share their expertise. Leaders also take workload and wellbeing seriously. They plan the school year thoughtfully, reduce unnecessary marking and paperwork and make staff welfare a regular part of discussions.

Trustees and members of the local community board understand and fulfil their statutory duties. They review the school's work thoroughly, including safeguarding, pupils' achievement and the support given to those who need additional help. Visits and focused questions help them check that decisions are making a difference. They provide informed support and challenge, keeping pupils' best interests central to their work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders provide a thoughtfully planned programme that helps pupils develop the knowledge, confidence and skills they need for life beyond school. The programme builds as pupils grow older and reflects the risks they may face in their community. Pupils understand healthy relationships, consent and how to recognise controlling behaviour. They learn how to keep themselves safe online, including when using artificial intelligence, and understand the dangers of exploitation and knife crime. They speak thoughtfully about equality and respect for people from different backgrounds. Their understanding of British values, including democracy and the rule of law, helps them become responsible members of society.

Pupils have meaningful opportunities to put these values into practice. Through the student council, they influence decisions about school life, including improvements to the environment. In Year 9, pupils carry out community projects that encourage them to consider the needs of others and make a difference. Cultural celebrations deepen their understanding of different beliefs and traditions. These experiences help pupils develop empathy, confidence and a sense of social responsibility.

Leaders ensure that pupils can take part in a wide range of clubs and activities. They check participation carefully and encourage disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to get involved. Cultural visits give pupils opportunities to experience new places and activities. Pupils broaden their interests, form friendships and develop teamwork and leadership skills.

Careers education begins early and becomes increasingly personal as pupils consider their futures. Encounters with employers, workplace visits and work experience help them understand different routes into employment. Pupils receive individual guidance when making important choices about further study or training.

Staff know pupils well and provide sensitive pastoral support. Pupils can turn to trusted adults, including specialist staff, for help with their emotional wellbeing. This helps them feel supported and equips them to face challenges with confidence.

Post-16 provision

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a distinctive sixth-form curriculum centred on the International Baccalaureate. Students choose from academic courses and courses linked to future careers that match their interests, strengths and ambitions. Staff provide individual guidance so that students follow suitable pathways. The wider programme develops practical skills, independence and a sense of responsibility.

Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to explain challenging ideas clearly. They ask questions that deepen understanding and check learning carefully so students can build on what they know. Students participate confidently in lessons, work independently and develop the knowledge needed for higher study and employment.

Students achieve very well. For example, results in International Baccalaureate courses compare favourably with international averages. Disadvantaged students and those with

special educational needs and/or disabilities succeed alongside their peers. Students receive guidance about university, apprenticeships and employment. Work experience, university visits and meetings with careers advisers help them make informed decisions. The vast majority progress to university and others move successfully into further training or employment.

Students value the personal attention and pastoral care they receive. Those who join from other schools settle quickly and become part of the sixth-form community. They take on meaningful roles as reading partners, mentors and club leaders, supporting younger pupils and developing confidence, teamwork and leadership skills.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum that helps pupils build their knowledge step by step from Year 7 onwards. The school's International Baccalaureate programme encourages pupils to connect ideas, think critically and apply what they learn. Subject leaders identify the important knowledge to teach and plan how this develops across year groups. Pupils study a broad range of subjects that prepare them well for future learning.

Teachers know their subjects well and usually explain new ideas clearly. Common lesson routines help pupils recall previous learning and settle quickly to work. Pupils practise using the vocabulary they need in different subjects. Teachers often check pupils' understanding and use what they find to guide learning. Leaders make reading a priority. Staff assess reading skills regularly and provide tailored help to improve fluency and comprehension for those pupils that need it.

Many teachers make thoughtful adjustments to explanations and activities so that pupils can overcome barriers to learning. However, this practice varies across subjects and year groups. Where checks on understanding are less precise, teachers sometimes move on before pupils are secure in their learning. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have recognised these differences and made improving teaching a priority. Focused coaching is helping staff to adapt their teaching more precisely.

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

Pupils flourish in this welcoming, ambitious school. The academy is organised into 5 smaller colleges, so every pupil has a team of adults who know them well and whom they can go to for help. Staff offer thoughtful guidance and respond quickly when pupils need extra help. Pupils treat one another with warmth and respect. Flags representing their different nationalities celebrate the school's diversity and help everyone feel that they belong.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum, shaped by the International Baccalaureate approach, which encourages curiosity, reflection and an understanding of the wider world.

Lessons are purposeful and generally taught well. Pupils develop knowledge and skills across subjects and talk confidently about what they have learned. They achieve well in public examinations, including those who face disadvantage, and develop the foundations they need for their next steps. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-considered support, including specialist provision where needed. This helps them participate fully in school life and make progress alongside their peers.

The school day is calm and orderly. Pupils move promptly between lessons, settle quickly to work and respond positively to the clear expectations. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Bullying is uncommon. Pupils trust adults to deal with concerns swiftly. They feel safe and understand how to protect themselves, both online and in their local community. Attendance is high and improving, including for pupils who previously struggled to attend regularly.

Pupils enjoy numerous opportunities beyond lessons. They participate in a wide range of clubs, trips and visits beyond lessons. These help them to discover new interests, make friends and grow in confidence. Pupils have meaningful opportunities to influence school life and contribute to their community. Sixth-form students value their courses and individual guidance. Many sixth-form students help younger pupils with their reading. This enables younger pupils to gain confidence, while older students develop their leadership skills.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that high-quality teaching is consistently embedded across subjects and year groups.

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 CBE.

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

This inspection took place on 3 and 4 November 2026.

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 the principal, other school leaders, staff and pupils. They also met representatives of Leigh Academies Trust, including the CEO and deputy CEO, as well as trustees and representatives of the Dartford and Bexley Community Board.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for up to 16 pupils with hearing impairment and/or speech, language and communication needs in a specially resourced provision.

The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. It was renamed Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy in September 2024. A new principal took up their post in September 2026. Building work is under way to expand the school and provide a new sixth-form block.

Principal: Gurjit Kaur Shergill

Lead inspector:
Robert Grice, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Ann Fearon, Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore, Ofsted Inspector
Scott Reece, His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 3 November 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,318
Above 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: 1,063

School capacity

1,500
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)

30.32%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

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

2.96%
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: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.07%
Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Below 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (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
2025/26 (provisional)	46.1%	46.3%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	35.2%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	37.0%	45.9%	Close to average

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
2025/26 (provisional)	46.5	46.2	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	42.9	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.5	45.9	Close to average

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)	0.14	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.01	-0.03	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.02	-0.03	Close to average

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
2025/26 (provisional)	37.9%	27.5%	Above
2024/25 (final)	19.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.3%	25.8%	Close to average

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
2025/26 (provisional)	39.9	35.6	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	33.8	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.0	34.6	Above

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)	-0.25	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.58	-0.57	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.68	-0.55	Close to average

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
2025/26 (provisional)	37.9%	54.3%	-16.4 pp
2024/25 (final)	19.2%	53.1%	-33.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	35.3%	53.1%	-17.8 pp

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
2025/26 (provisional)	39.9	50.7	-10.9
2024/25 (final)	33.8	50.4	-16.6
2023/24 (final)	41.0	50.0	-9.0

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 non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.25	0.16	-0.42
2022/23 (final)	-0.58	0.17	-0.75
2021/22 (final)	-0.68	0.15	-0.83

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	91%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Average

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)	28.37	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.84	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27.63	34.16	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)	-0.6	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average

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
2025/26 (1 term)	7.8%	7.8%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.0%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.2%	8.9%	Close to average

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
2025/26 (1 term)	25.5%	21.5%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	26.4%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	28.4%	25.6%	Close to average

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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