

Inspection of Leigh Academy Dartford

York Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 1SQ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Good

The principal of this school is Rebecca Roberts. This school is part of the 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody the school's motto of being 'Determined, Persistent Achievers Learning to Change the World'. They achieve exceptionally well because they receive expert support from staff that know them extremely well. Pupils continually strive to be the best that they can be. They take sensible risks when learning as they relish the chance to grow from any mistakes. They work extremely hard to meet the high expectations that all staff hold of them.

Children make a flying start as soon as they join the school in early years. They learn to make positive friendships, take turns and share toys. Fun and exciting learning sparks their curiosity and imagination. A sharp focus on practising reading, writing and mathematics skills enables children to build a secure foundation of knowledge.

Children and pupils that speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support from skilled staff. Pupils learn to use symbols and signs to help them interact fully with their peers and learning.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary as staff cultivate important character traits such as 'being principled'. Pupils make every moment of the school day count. Clear and consistent routines mean pupils feel safe, as they know what to expect.

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

The school has developed an exceptionally ambitious curriculum. It reflects the needs and context of the pupils who attend. The curriculum from Nursery through to key stage 2 meticulously identifies the skills and knowledge that pupils need to know. Learning builds in a logical sequence, helping pupils to connect new learning with prior knowledge. Pupils learn a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary that they use to talk knowledgeably about their learning. Teachers skilfully help pupils connect ideas from related topics in complex ways. For example, in history, pupils learn about how the Second World War shaped geographical features of Dartford.

The school's mantra of 'Invisible Inclusion' means that pupils receive the right support that they need to thrive. When pupils join the school, staff build effective relationships with families. Together, staff work with parents and carers of pupils to identify and develop precise strategies to meet additional needs, including SEND. Staff help families to apply the same strategies at home to encourage continuity of home-school routines. A large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language or struggle to communicate well. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to communicate and fully engage with learning. This means all pupils achieve exceptionally well. Published outcomes are significantly above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school places a high priority on pupils learning to read well. Children in nursery listen to and join in with a wide variety of stories and rhymes. This means that they learn to

recognise sounds and patterns in words. Pupils in early years benefit from expert teaching of phonics. Teachers model sounds clearly, helping pupils to learn to blend sounds to read new words. Pupils practise reading every day. They have multiple opportunities to read aloud from exciting texts that enrich their learning. Pupils who need additional help receive tailored interventions to enable them to keep up. They quickly become fluent and confident at reading.

Behaviour is exemplary. Calm and orderly classrooms mean pupils can learn very well. During breaktimes, pupils play together, showing upmost kindness and respect towards their peers. Pupils that need help to manage their behaviour positively receive effective and well-considered support. Staff provide swift and precise help to encourage regular attendance at school.

An outstanding approach to pupils' personal development fulfils the school's aim for pupils to be 'secondary school ready'. Pupils learn how to stay safe and take care of their health and well-being. They are proud to belong to a wonderfully diverse school and show a deep understanding of fundamental British values, such as respect and tolerance. They share food and traditional stories during multicultural picnics with their families on the school field. Pupils strive to make the world a better place, such as raising money to support girls to attend school in India. They learn about managing money through 'micro-loan' initiatives to support small enterprises in countries such as Guatemala. The school pays particular attention to helping disadvantaged pupils access the multitude of clubs and trips that the school offers to enrich pupils' education.

The school is unequivocally ambitious for pupils to thrive and excel. School decisions are well-informed, strategic and have strong impact. Staff speak highly of the positive culture of challenge and support. Governors and trustees fulfil their roles exceptionally well. They ensure that decisions leaders make result in pupils receiving an outstanding quality of education and care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	141534
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341785
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
CEO of the trust	Simon Beamish
Principal	Rebecca Roberts
Website	www.dartfordprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leigh Academies Trust.
- The school is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School and teaches the Primary Years Programme.
- The school operates on two sites. The infant site is in St Albans Road Dartford, Kent DA1 1TE. The junior site is in York Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 1SQ.
- The school is governed by the trust and a local academy board with delegated powers.
- The school does not use any alternative provision currently.
- The school has Nursery provision on site and operates a breakfast club provided by the school.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and teaching staff. The lead inspector also met with the chair and vice-chair of governors, and the chair of the board of trustees. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the trust and the academies' director.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils read aloud to familiar adults.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, they spoke to pupils about their experiences of school life. Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo Hygate	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Harris	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Lythgoe	Ofsted Inspector

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