

Leigh Academy Mascalls

Address: Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 6LT

Unique reference number (URN): 136847

Inspection report: 28 April 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 ●

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders and those responsible for governance act with integrity and a strong sense of moral purpose. They are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils in their community receive an education that enables them to flourish and prepares them well for the future. This commitment was demonstrated clearly when the school welcomed a significantly large group of pupils from a local school that closed in 2022. Leaders responded with determination, compassion and ambition, integrating these pupils successfully and placing them on a trajectory towards success.

The school has made rapid progress with this group, although this is not yet reflected in all published outcomes. Attendance and behaviour have improved markedly, and achievement gaps have narrowed. At the same time, leaders ensured that pupils already on roll continued to benefit from a secure and effective educational provision. This demonstrates leaders' ability to sustain high standards while managing significant organisational challenge, all while serving the best interests of the community.

Governance at every level provides effective, supportive challenge. Governors and trustees hold an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Together, leadership and governance remain unrelenting in their ambition for all pupils.

Leaders take a strategic and coherent approach to developing teaching and curriculum expertise. Professional development is well structured and responsive to emerging needs, with a clear emphasis on effective assessment and adaptive teaching. Staff feel empowered to take ownership of their development and describe a culture where professional growth is valued. They feel trusted and well guided, and collaboration across the trust strengthens consistency and shared practice.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's personal development provision is a particular strength. Leaders are deliberate in their planning of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. The curriculum revisits key themes in greater depth as pupils move through the school, ensuring essential content is encountered repeatedly. This structure supports high pupil mobility and enables all pupils to build secure understanding. From Year 7 into the sixth form, the programme develops pupils' knowledge of a wide range of statutory topics in a considered and age-appropriate way. Leaders review contextual issues regularly, particularly through the current-affairs strand. They respond swiftly to emerging risks, for example online safety or social media. Leaders routinely check the impact of the programme, allowing them to evaluate pupils' knowledge securely and provide targeted support where needed.

PSHE teaching is highly effective. Specialist staff receive regular training to ensure pupils learn deeply about important topics such as community cohesion and respect for others. Expert teaching encourages pupils to reflect on their character and their role in society. In Year 9, learning culminates in all pupils designing their own community project to make a positive contribution to society. Pupils have secure knowledge of personal safety, protected characteristics and citizenship. The school promotes an inclusive environment where pupils

feel represented and heard. Pupils show leadership, running their own clubs or raising money for their linked school in Tanzania. Sixth-form students are excellent role models, supporting younger pupils through reading and peer mentoring.

Leaders have a deep understanding of their pupils and systematically identify individuals or groups who may need additional support to access the provision. A wide range of enrichment opportunities broadens pupils' experiences, and participation is monitored carefully to ensure disadvantaged pupils take part fully. Careers education is comprehensive across all key stages, with leaders continuing to broaden pupils' aspirations and awareness of ambitious pathways, including employment options.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

Sixth-form students are very well prepared for their next steps into adulthood. The school is highly ambitious for them and ensures they develop not only secure academic knowledge but also the ideas and habits they need to support future success. As a result, students progress to a wide range of exciting and competitive destinations, including work, apprenticeships and university.

The sixth form's inclusive ethos enables students with low prior attainment to complete rigorous post-16 pathways, including A-level programmes. These students achieve as well as their peers nationally. Students achieve particularly well on applied courses because of expert teaching and strong support. Those with additional barriers, including students with education, health and care plans or young carers, are nurtured through highly individualised provision and appropriate use of bursary funding.

The school offers a broad and innovative curriculum, combining academic, applied and technical subjects. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and check that students understand and can apply specialist language with sophistication. Students receive precise feedback that helps them improve their work successfully.

Careers education is particularly effective in the sixth form. Students use this guidance to make mature decisions about post-18 pathways. The school engages well with universities, apprenticeship providers and employers to ensure students are well informed about their options.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils generally learn well across all key stages, securing essential knowledge that prepares them effectively for key stage 4 and post-16 study. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, usually show secure understanding and make appropriate progress from their starting points, reflected in the quality of their work and published outcomes.

Published outcomes show that many pupils with lower and average starting points achieve in line with pupils of similar ability nationally. Those who have benefited from the school's provision throughout their education achieve outcomes comparable with national averages. A significant minority of pupils with much lower starting points joined the school in 2022. Their progress has improved steadily, narrowing gaps between all pupils in the school and their peers nationally. An increasing number of pupils with disrupted education now achieve a grade 4 or 5 in English and mathematics, supported by leaders' relentless focus on strengthening the teaching of these subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders maintain detailed oversight of attendance. Through effective communication with families and external agencies, staff remove barriers that prevent regular attendance. Over time, leaders have secured clear improvements, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced significantly. This reflects leaders' ongoing, thoughtful and determined approach to raising attendance for all.

Leaders set clear expectations for behaviour and communicate these effectively. Well-defined systems, rules and routines embed high standards and reduce low-level disruption. Staff and pupils understand expectations, consequences and rewards. Leaders monitor behaviour closely and analyse patterns to guide their actions. They act as visible role models, establishing consistency across the school. This work has created a calm and productive environment where pupils can learn well.

Leaders make suitable adaptations for vulnerable pupils without lowering expectations. They work effectively with external agencies and provide highly effective pastoral support. Suspensions are used appropriately, and a thorough reintegration process ensures pupils returning from suspension receive effective support to avoid repeated sanctions. As a result, suspension rates have fallen for all pupils. Bullying is rare because staff address unkindness quickly and robustly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders act decisively to ensure pupils learn an ambitious curriculum that supports future success. They review the curriculum continually so it meets pupils' needs. The curriculum places emphasis on developing essential literacy and numeracy knowledge. Staff intervene promptly when pupils have gaps caused by disrupted education, using targeted support to strengthen pupils' fluency in reading and writing.

The ambitious curriculum is very well planned. Leaders sequence learning in a logical order so pupils build knowledge securely over time. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and typically deliver learning effectively. They understand the additional support some pupils need to access the curriculum. This information is generally used well to help pupils with extra needs learn securely. Teachers check understanding routinely, using questioning to assess learning. When they identify gaps, teaching usually revisits key ideas or addresses misconceptions.

Occasionally, teachers do not check precisely enough that all pupils have secured important knowledge or can use technical vocabulary accurately. When this happens, misunderstandings may go unnoticed, placing a few pupils at risk of falling behind. Leaders continually monitor the quality of teaching and they know well what is needed to improve further to ensure every pupil benefits fully from the ambitious curriculum.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. The school works closely with feeder primary schools to identify pupils who may need additional support. Staff establish a clear understanding of pupils' starting points when they join the school. They follow a clear process to alert leaders to emerging barriers to learning. Leaders monitor safeguarding, attendance and behaviour information to recognise changing needs, enabling staff to act swiftly when pupils become temporarily vulnerable, such as after a bereavement.

Leaders design support that reduces barriers to learning and wellbeing. Staff receive regular professional development to implement supportive strategies in lessons. In most lessons, staff use pupil information to adapt teaching approaches. Well-designed interventions meet learning needs and typically improve pupils' access to learning. Leaders continue to improve the precision with which they monitor the impact of support. The school's ambition for all pupils, including those with barriers to learning, remains unwavering. Adaptations, including decisions about assistive technology or handwriting support, are thoughtful and evidence-based.

Leaders use pupil premium funding to successfully remove barriers and provide personalised support when needed. They ensure that alternative provision successfully leads to improved attendance and positive engagement with learning.

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

Leigh Academy Mascalls is a welcoming and friendly school where pupils feel a sense of belonging and pride. Pupils know staff want the very best for them and appreciate the balance of support and challenge. The school fosters a sense of community effectively through its small-colleges approach. Pupils feel safe because they trust staff to help them succeed.

Over the past few years, a significant proportion of pupils joined the school part way through their education after a local school closed. Staff gave these pupils an inclusive welcome, helping them settle successfully into school life. These pupils are now fully integrated into the school. They attend regularly and achieve well.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, generally achieve well. Published outcomes reflect this, sitting close to national averages. Staff quickly identify pupils who have additional barriers to learning and give them appropriate help to succeed. Supportive strategies such as additional literacy

lessons, enable pupils to access learning successfully. Pupils work hard and persevere, rising to the challenges of the ambitious and interesting curriculum. Teaching in the sixth form is particularly effective. Students succeed very well, articulating their learning with confidence and fluency. Most progress to ambitious destinations such as higher education, training pathways, or employment.

Due to the school's hard work, pupils' attendance is improving, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Staff provide targeted help effectively, supporting pupils to overcome barriers to engaging with school. Pupils are polite and respectful towards their peers and staff. Any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the importance of being good citizens and recognise their role in making the school a positive place for everyone to enjoy. Pupils are creative, enjoying annual music festivals and opportunities to take part in impressive drama and dance productions.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information effectively to identify and address gaps, errors and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.
 - Leaders should continue to raise the achievement of pupils, so that they acquire the detailed and ambitious knowledge they need for future success.
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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 and trustees 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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Principal: Jo Brooks

Lead inspector:

Michelle Payne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ed Mather, His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Michelle Smith, Ofsted Inspector

Amy Newman Newman, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,238

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

1,450

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)

25.72%

Close to 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

1.62%

Below 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

15.91%

Close to 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).

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)	34.9%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	34.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.7%	45.3%	Below

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)	40.4	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	41.5	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.9	46.3	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)	-0.17	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.11	-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
2024/25 (final)	20.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	18.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	17.5%	25.2%	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
2024/25 (final)	33.3	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.4	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.5	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.77	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.57	-0.57	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
2024/25 (final)	20.0%	53.1%	-33.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	18.8%	53.1%	-34.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.5%	52.4%	-34.9 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
2024/25 (final)	33.3	50.4	-17.1
2023/24 (final)	30.4	50.0	-19.7
2022/23 (final)	33.5	50.3	-16.8

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)	-0.77	0.16	-0.93
2022/23 (final)	-0.57	0.17	-0.74

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)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	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)	27.41	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.77	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.57	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)	-0.2	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
2024/25 (3 term)	7.6%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.0%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.7%	9.0%	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)	24.0%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	28.2%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	35.3%	26.5%	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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