

Inspection of Longfield Academy

Main Road, Longfield, Kent DA3 7PH

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Felix Donkor. The 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, Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green.

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What is it like to attend this school?

This inclusive school has high expectations of all pupils' achievement and behaviour. The school values of 'being respectful, being aspirational and being caring' are threaded through daily life here. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those attending the specially resourced provision, The Spectrum Centre, are fully integrated into school life. Vigilant, well-trained staff make sure that pupils are safe. Pupils are known as individuals and their well-being is a high priority. Pupils say that bullying happens occasionally. When it does, nearly all pupils trust staff to deal with it effectively.

Through its curriculum, the school helps pupils to learn about being global citizens and to develop an international perspective. The school has links with other schools across the world. Pupils value their teachers and work hard. Pupils understand that the school expects 'disruption free learning' during lessons and almost all live up to these expectations. Through roles such as 'eco reps' and student leaders, pupils play a meaningful part in school life. They know that staff are keen to listen to their views and will act on them.

Students in the sixth form receive an exceptionally strong education. They are very well prepared for their next steps. Students enjoy a broad, well-considered enrichment programme and are very positive about their experience here.

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

The school is determined that all pupils receive an ambitious, rounded education. Almost all pupils in Year 10 now study the full range of English baccalaureate subjects. In the sixth form, the number of students studying A levels in subjects such as mathematics has grown significantly.

School leaders, well supported by trust staff, constantly refine the curriculum to make sure it is both challenging and accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND. The curriculum is well-sequenced so that pupils build on what they already know. Pupils benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge. In the sixth form, students achieve exceptionally well thanks to their teachers' expertise and strong support. Across most subjects, teachers present ideas clearly and ask pertinent questions to check that pupils have understood. Teachers spot and address pupils' misconceptions effectively. They ensure that pupils have the resources they need to learn well.

Following the pandemic, pupils' GCSE outcomes dipped. They did not achieve as well as they had done before the pandemic. However, achievement is now improving again across most areas, including for pupils with SEND. In a couple of subjects, however, many pupils continue to have stubborn gaps in their learning. These gaps have not yet been successfully addressed by their teachers. This means that pupils are not currently achieving as well as they could.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves are very high. Sixth-form students are exceptionally mature, acting as role models for younger pupils. Pupils are polite and courteous. Nevertheless, a few pupils very occasionally behave in a way that is not acceptable. Staff deal with this swiftly and appropriately. If a pupil with SEND finds it hard to behave well, staff deal with this sensitively. In lessons, almost all pupils focus well on their work.

Since the pandemic, too many pupils have not attended school regularly. This has affected their learning and achievement. Thanks to a raft of supportive measures put in place by the school, attendance is now rising again.

The school offers a broad and rich personal development programme. It provides pupils with strong pastoral support, including support for pupils' mental health. Regular trips and visits help make learning relevant for pupils. For example, pupils enjoy seeing Shakespeare plays at The Globe theatre, and visiting galleries and historical sites. The school offers extra-curricular clubs which develop pupils' talents and interests well. Pupils with SEND participate regularly in these activities. A comprehensive careers programme provides pupils and sixth-form students with helpful support and guidance when considering their next steps. The school teaches pupils to appreciate inclusivity and this helps them to behave respectfully towards others. Pupils are taught about citizenship, relationships, well-being and staying safe, including when online.

Staff are proud to belong to this vibrant community. They feel well supported by leaders. Staff appreciate the training they receive. It helps them to develop in their roles well. Governors and trustees have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Most parents endorse the work of the school. They commend the approachable, knowledgeable and encouraging staff, and appreciate the many opportunities that their child receives. Some parents, however, feel that the school should do even more to support their child.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Since the pandemic, some pupils have developed gaps in their knowledge which are not always successfully addressed by teachers. As a result, in a couple of subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that all staff are well supported to use the best teaching methods to address these gaps so that all pupils can achieve well.

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	135630
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10287994
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive (non-selective)
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1035
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	138
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green CBE
Principal	Felix Donkor
CEO of the trust	Simon Beamish
Website	www.longfieldacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leigh Academies Trust. The trust has 31 primary, secondary and special schools in the South East.
- The academy is an International Baccalaureate world school, offering the middle years programme at key stage 3.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, The Spectrum Centre, for pupils with autism. Currently, 43 pupils attend this provision.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with academy leaders, including the principal, vice-principals, special educational needs coordinator and other subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the trust's chief executive office and academies director.
- The lead inspector met with five members of the local governing board and spoke to the chair of trustees.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages, history, performing arts, art and design and photography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the school's wider curriculum.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included the views of pupils and staff submitted via Ofsted's confidential surveys.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via email and the 157 responses via Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Maria Roberts, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicky Archer	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Boddington	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Potten	Ofsted Inspector

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