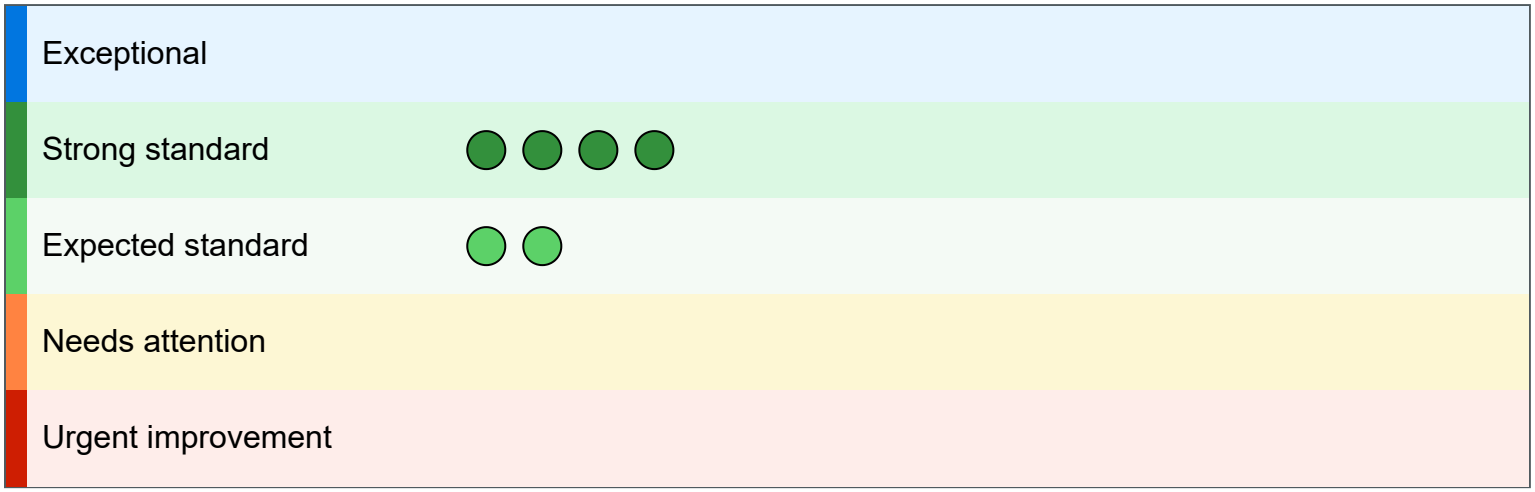
Droylsden Academy

Address: Manor Road, Droylsden, Manchester, GREATER MANCHESTER, M43 6QD

Unique reference number (URN): 135864

Inspection report: 6 October 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 consistently attain results in line with, or above, those of their peers nationally in the examinations at the end of key stage 4. In the case of the large proportion of disadvantaged pupils, this is a point of celebration. These pupils have consistently attained results significantly above those of their peers nationally.

Pupils currently in school progress consistently well through the curriculum. They grapple with challenging ideas. Pupils articulate their learning with clarity and confidence and write fluently and accurately. Pupils have the literacy and numeracy skills that they need to access learning across the curriculum. Pupils who face challenges to learning progress well from their respective starting points. They routinely receive the support that they need to succeed.

Leaders ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills that they need to progress securely to the next stage of their education, employment or training. Pupils are well informed about their future options and have the knowledge they need to pursue their chosen career pathways.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. They have determined clear learning milestones. Consequently, leaders can check quickly and accurately how well pupils are learning. The curriculum is ordered in a logical way. New knowledge and skills build coherently over time. Leaders throughout the school consistently monitor the success of the curriculum. As a result, they have a precise understanding of its strengths. Similarly, they use their incisive analysis to secure any required improvements at pace.

Teaching enables pupils to learn consistently well. Staff are highly skilled in checking where pupils may have gaps in their learning. They use this information to address any gaps quickly so that nobody falls behind. Teachers are specialists in their subjects. They use their subject knowledge to provide thoughtful explanations of new ideas.

Staff quickly identify any gaps in pupils’ knowledge of reading, writing or mathematics. Subsequently, they implement sophisticated support to help pupils catch up. This is particularly the case for pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read.

The fully inclusive curriculum, thoughtful adaptations and leaders' commitment to inclusion enable pupils who face challenges to learning to succeed. Whether it be through the support of another adult in lessons or through the use of technology, staff consistently meet pupils' needs well.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders are driven by an impassioned commitment to reduce any barriers to learning or wellbeing that a pupil may face. They have established comprehensive systems to identify

pupils' needs in a timely way. This starts before pupils join the school. Leaders pay astute attention to the transition arrangements for the significant number of pupils who face challenges to academic and personal success. They review support strategies regularly. Leaders act promptly to try something new. As a result, pupils consistently receive the support that they need. Leaders ensure that staff have the skills that they need to enable pupils to thrive.

Leaders make judicious use of the additional funds that they receive from the pupil premium grant. For instance, they have employed additional staff members in English and mathematics. These staff prioritise disadvantaged pupils for extra help to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This has had a positive impact on these pupils' GCSE results at the end of Year 11.

Leaders have established a highly effective relationship with the local authority's virtual school. This ensures that the right support is implemented to enable these pupils to thrive. Leaders make sparing and considered use of alternative provision. They consistently make decisions in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have an unrelenting drive for evermore success at this school. They place no limits on what can be achieved by pupils and staff at Droylsden Academy. Leaders' quality assurance strategies mean that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders' insightful actions have yielded impressive, rapid improvements over time. For example, there are sustained positive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and continued gains in their attendance rates.

Those responsible for governance bring considerable expertise to their role. They support and challenge with astute attention to what will make the biggest difference to pupils' academic and personal success. They uphold their statutory duties with a keen eye on equality and fairness for staff and pupils alike.

Leaders establish highly effective partnerships outside of school. This includes with parents and carers, who know that leaders act in the best interests of their children. Leaders work in a strategic and sophisticated way with external partners. They bring in expertise to the school or share their own work to help others.

Staff value the work that leaders do. For instance, they appreciate the clarity of communication and opportunities to plan together. The latter helps staff to make the best use of their time. Staff know that leaders will listen to them if they have something on their mind. Leaders have designed a highly effective programme of professional development for staff. Teachers follow the school's ambitious training programmes. This ensures that teaching is consistently of a high standard. Staff at an early stage of their careers are very well supported. Staff are incredibly proud to work at this school.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have an informed and accurate understanding of attendance. They have developed and refined strategies over time. Leaders' sharp attention to detail has had a significant impact on positive rates of attendance at school. This includes the attendance of key groups such as disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The importance of high attendance and its links to achievement are consistently promoted across the school. Attendance is everyone's responsibility. Leaders have developed highly effective approaches to support those who find regular attendance at school a particular challenge. For example, they work closely with families, provide counselling and have established a nurturing start to the school day through the 'On Board Centre'.

Leaders have established clear expectations for conduct and learning. Staff and pupils understand the routines and rules of the school day. During lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They know that a positive work ethic secures positive results. At social times, for the most part, pupils enjoy time spent with their friends in a respectful and calm manner. Leaders make effective use of the 'Navigation Room' to support those pupils who need a bespoke approach to support their conduct. Bullying, derogatory language and unkind behaviours, both in person and online, are uncommon. Leaders take effective action to address this if it happens.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have developed a thoughtful and comprehensive programme of personal development and wellbeing. They supplement 'Life Skills' lessons with assemblies, visits and talks. Leaders have carefully considered the needs of their pupils. As a result, pupils typically secure the knowledge that they need to be successful and safe in the future. For instance, leaders ensure that pupils know the important features of healthy relationships. Pupils know how to stay safe online. They know the potential advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence.

Pupils develop an understanding of ideas such as democracy and the rule of British law. They know that discrimination is wrong. Pupils appreciate that understanding differences supports a harmonious society. Older pupils have a growing knowledge of personal finances and how to manage their money effectively.

Leaders have established a rich programme of additional opportunities through the school's 'Electives Programme'. This enables pupils to try something new, enhance learning and enrich their lives. For example, pupils take part in drama or debating or pursue a sporting interest, to name but a few. Leaders make sure that everyone can take part. For instance, they provide additional funding to ensure that nobody misses out on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Pupils develop leadership skills by serving their school in several ways. For example, some pupils act as peer supporters, helping younger pupils find their way. Other pupils support the regular 'safeguarding sweeps'. This contributes to the strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

Leaders have established supportive and effective pastoral systems. Pupils have confidence in well-trained and kind staff who support them with any worries or concerns that they have.

Leaders have enhanced their work on careers education, information, advice and guidance. Pupils develop a clear understanding of what they can achieve in the future, for example, through regular careers events, mock interviews and college visits. This helps pupils to develop ambitious aims for the future and know how to realise these.

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

Pupils know what is expected of them as they arrive at school. They wear their uniform with pride and have the correct equipment to make a success of the day ahead. They are greeted by warm smiles on the faces of staff who know them well. As the bell sounds for the next part of the day, pupils typically move with intention and purpose. They are well-versed in the expectations of leaders and the routines of the school day. Pupils are happy and safe at this school.

Leaders' emphasis on belonging supports pupils to attend school regularly. This is a happy school where positive relationships between teachers and pupils enable pupils to thrive. Those pupils who need a different start to the day are supported well through the 'On Board Centre'. This helps these pupils to get each day off to a positive start.

In lessons, pupils' conduct supports a purposeful learning environment where teachers can teach and their peers can learn. They are calm and focused on the task in hand, keen to learn more. For the most part, during social times, pupils are courteous and considerate of those around them. Any rare cases of bullying are dealt with effectively and efficiently by well-trained staff.

Pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, attain results in the examinations at the end of key stage 4 above those of their peers nationally. As such, they are prepared well for their next steps. Pupils who face barriers to learning are supported in a highly effective way by staff who know them well.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to nurture different interests and uncover hidden talents through the school's 'Electives Programme'. Leaders are keen for pupils to try something new. This can include robotics, dance and projects to promote sustainability. There is something for everyone.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to ensure that pupils consistently set a positive example to each other throughout the school day.

- Leaders should continue to refine their ways of checking the impact of the rich personal development and wellbeing programme so that any gaps in participation or knowledge are closed quickly.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Tame River Educational 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), Phil Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Leon Dowd.

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

This inspection took place on 6 and 7 October 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 headteacher, other school leaders, staff and trust leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO, the chair of the trust board and members of the local governing committee, including the chair. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority. An inspector spoke with a representative of the alternative provider that the school uses.

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 currently makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Edward Mayell

Lead inspector:
Neil Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Timothy Gartside, Ofsted Inspector
Marc Doyle, Ofsted Inspector
Joe Barker, Ofsted 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 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

926
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: 1,063

School capacity

930
Below 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)

42.55%
Above 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

6.16%
Well above 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

24.19%
Well 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

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)	49.1%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53.4%	45.3%	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
2024/25 (final)	47.7	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46.9	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	48.4	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)	0.14	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.37	-0.03	Above
2021/22 (final)	0.27	-0.03	Above

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)	38.7%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	41.3%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	42.4%	25.2%	Above

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)	43.0	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	41.1	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	43.7	35.0	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)	-0.40	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.05	-0.57	Above
2021/22 (final)	-0.43	-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
2024/25 (final)	38.7%	53.1%	-14.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	41.3%	53.1%	-11.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	42.4%	52.4%	-10.1 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)	43.0	50.4	-7.4
2023/24 (final)	41.1	50.0	-8.9
2022/23 (final)	43.7	50.3	-6.6

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)	-0.40	0.16	-0.56
2022/23 (final)	0.05	0.17	-0.12
2021/22 (final)	-0.43	0.15	-0.59

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)	87%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	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)	7.5%	7.8%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.4%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.6%	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)	19.3%	21.5%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	24.3%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	23.6%	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.

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