

MAKING LEARNING IRRESISTIBLE



THE  
**GORDON  
CHILDREN'S**  
ACADEMY





# Welcome to The Gordon Children's Academy

**A very warm welcome to you from the staff, governors and children of The Gordon Children's Academy.**

The Gordon Children's Academy is a thinking and learning community where every child can feel happy, secure and valued. We are relentless in pursuing and achieving goals for every child, every minute of every day.

We recognise that every child is on their own individual learning journey, and we provide opportunities that will inspire, challenge and develop all pupils to question, reflect and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and meaningful, and ensures our children are equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience they need to succeed now and in later life.

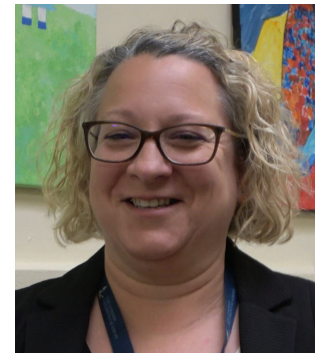
The Gordon Children's Academy is proud to be part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, a non-profit, charitable trust that has successfully grown over the last few years, and now includes a diverse range of academies in Medway, Plymouth, Paignton, and Portsmouth.

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust takes a unique approach to education, focusing on students' metacognition and developing their thinking skills and habits of mind: as a Trust, we truly believe this is the best way to transform the life chances of our

children and develop them into lifelong learners.

At The Gordon Children's Academy, we strongly believe in teaching children to become independent thinkers, thus preparing them for the ever-changing world that awaits them. Every child at our school, regardless of their starting point in life, will grow intellectually, personally and morally, every minute of every day.

Nicola Youseman,  
**Headteacher**



## Values and Habits

**Here at The Gordon Children's Academy, we believe strongly in the importance of parents and school working in partnership for the benefit of all our children.**

We all work very hard to create a positive atmosphere where everyone can feel happy, safe, secure and valued.

Our aim is to provide an education that meets the needs of all our children, and we expect high standards of behaviour alongside a positive attitude to learning.

### **Our Vision**

Children at Gordon are keen to learn new knowledge and skills. Staff strive to provide a range of rich, inclusive learning experiences in all aspects of school life. They nurture our learners and improve their academic, emotional, moral, cultural and physical development. Our curriculum teaches pupils to become independent thinkers who will be able to approach challenges with resilience and compassion. It is designed to broaden our children's horizons and empower them to be curious about the world around them.

Our staff recognise the importance of every child's education and design our curriculum and lessons to build knowledge progressively. Key concepts are revisited regularly, ensuring a strong foundation that pupils can continuously build upon.

Gordon Children's Academy is at the heart of the community and children are taught to be active citizens. They will learn to appreciate how diversity positively impacts on society and how they can respectfully fulfil their responsibilities within the community. Our children are friendly, courteous and kind. They will be given the chance to explore

a range of roles and responsibilities across the year groups. We are aspirational for our children, and staff encourage them to embrace opportunities for them to be their best selves.

The school will provide the children with a range of experiences and activities to explore where their strengths and interests lie. Through these, children build their knowledge of opportunities that exist, both in our locality and beyond. This knowledge will enhance and transform life chances.

### **Children at Gordon strive to be Gordon Greats: the best versions of themselves.**

Throughout our school, we have five great habits that provide an excellent way for our pupils to endeavour every day. Our Gordon Greats are: Ambitious, Brave, Confident, Kind, Proud. We also award pupils who frequently display all of this for being Gordon Great Pupils.





The Gordon Children's Academy





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# Thinking

**The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is a family of schools that work together to 'Transform the Life Chances' of all our children and young people. We share a common mission to nurture successful young people who are confident and can think and act independently.**

As part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, The Gordon Children's Academy takes pride in the unique approach we take to education: we provide our children with the skills and tools they need to think in a variety of ways and become lifelong learners. We believe that the best way to transform the life chances of our young people and help them achieve their aspirations is by shaping their minds, attitudes and habits through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the masters of their own destiny.

Our pupils are equipped with a bank of Thinking Tools designed to prepare them for the range of scenarios, dilemmas and circumstances that they may face in life as part of modern society. The integration of these tools into our curriculum is supported by scientific and metacognitive research. Children are encouraged to apply their tools independently and use them to unlock new ideas.

Our Thinking Tools include: Thinking Maps, De Bono's Thinking Hats and Art Costa's Habits of Mind. These tools are used consistently across all areas of our curriculum and support our pupils tremendously in their learning and personal growth.

The concept of 'Being your Best Self' is also at the heart of our approach to learning at The Gordon Children's Academy, as part of our Thinking School

ethos. Children are encouraged to strive to be and achieve their best, and are given multiple opportunities to reflect on their learning and work on their personal development.

In 2022, The Gordon Children's Academy was reaccredited as a Thinking School by the University of Exeter's School of Education, which leads the way on Metacognition, Thinking Skills and Creativity and provides a framework for schools to follow to become recognised Thinking Schools.

In a glowing report on our school, the University commented that: *"The Academy coveys a positive, caring and creative environment."*

*"The Gordon Children's Academy is a popular and successful school."*

*"Achievement continues to rise across the school with attendance and behaviour being of an excellent standard."*

*"The Gordon Children's Academy has a rich extra-curricular offering designed to build children's cultural capital."*

## Our Curriculum

**At The Gordon Children's Academy, we believe every child is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum that will allow them to succeed and develop a life-long love of learning.**

Our curriculum will provide pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. Pupils are given every opportunity to apply their learning both inside the classroom and to take it outside into the real world.

Part of our commitment to transforming life chances is offering a wide range of learning experiences throughout our curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils will have the opportunity to learn and explore:

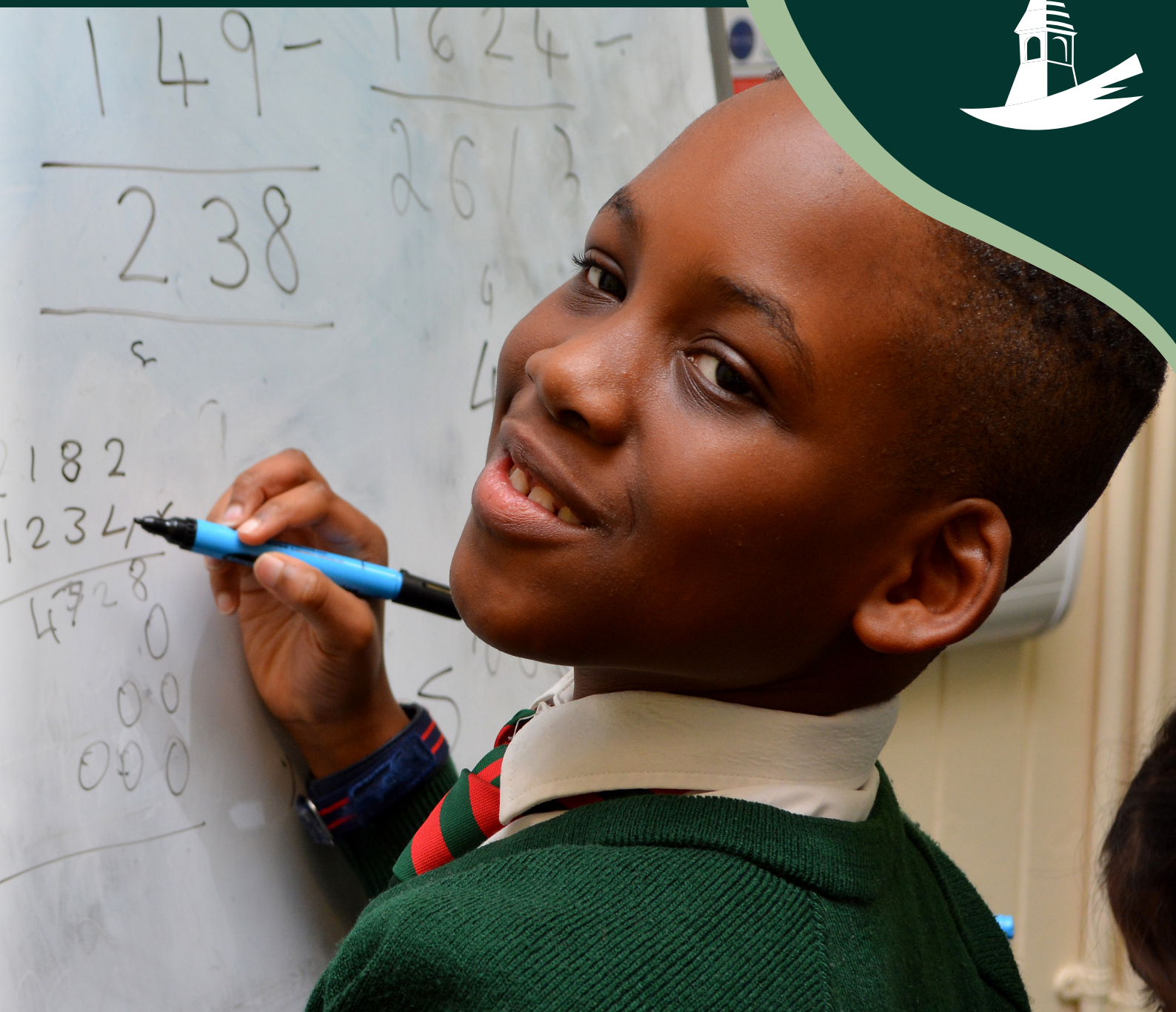
- Science
- Design and Technology
- English
- Mathematics
- Computing
- PE
- History
- PSHE
- Geography
- RE
- French
- Performing Arts, including Music Art

We also have a strong focus on teaching children to have a strong ability to express themselves well and grammatically in speech.

We aim to make learning irresistible so that your child comes to school every day happy and eager to learn. We know that children are naturally inquisitive, and we aim to develop this curiosity by providing a curriculum that is based on relevant, first-hand experiences that engage and inspire the children.











The Gordon Children's Academy



# Enrichment Opportunities

**Enrichment is not for the few, but for all. At The Gordon Children's Academy, we ensure all children have equal opportunity to learn in a safe and caring environment and experience a range of diverse subjects and learning opportunities during their time in the Academy.**

Our range of enrichment opportunities allow our pupils to expand their learning beyond the curriculum and explore diverse cultural and creative opportunities to broaden their horizons.

Some of the enrichment opportunities our pupils can access include:

- Choir Club
- Aim High Club
- Drama Club
- A wide range of sports clubs
- We Are One Events (focusing on inclusivity and understanding the world around us)
- World Book Day celebrations
- Number Day
- School trips and visits
- Activity/subject themed weeks, such as Science Week and Mental Health Week

## WeAreOne Events

As part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, our children have the opportunity to participate in our Trust's 'We Are One' events, where schools across our Trust unite in celebration of a key event or national day.

Our children love getting involved and representing our school in a range of Trust-wide competitions, fundraising events and creative activities. Previous

'We Are One' events have included World Book Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and TSArTs Week.

Being part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust family opens our school and our children up to a world of opportunities to network, collaborate and compete as part of a wider community.

## Artsmark

**At The Gordon Children's Academy, we believe we have a responsibility to build our young people's cultural capital as much as possible: this means offering opportunities for our children to explore culture in its various forms, immerse themselves in the Arts and learn about the world beyond their personal location and circumstances.**

We believe that in expanding our pupils' cultural knowledge and encouraging them to engage in new experiences, we can support their personal growth and extend their knowledge beyond the taught curriculum.

Every student at The Gordon Children's Academy has a Cultural Passport which encourages them to record and reflect on their cultural experiences. The Passport offers a range of activities and ideas for broadening students' horizons and developing their skills, from managing a budget and learning a survival skill to visiting an art gallery and trying foods from different countries. Our school offers as many opportunities as possible to equip our young people with a diverse set of experiences, skills and knowledge.

In order to offer a full and enriching experience which builds cultural capital, The Gordon Children's Academy has committed to an Artsmark journey, ensuring the cultural and creative education we provide is broad, diverse and engaging. We were awarded the Silver Artsmark Award during April 2024.











# Parental Involvement

**At The Gordon Children's Academy, parents and carers are encouraged to be active and involved in their child's learning, and to have high expectations of the school from the beginning.**

We value you as your child's first educator and ask you to work with us to ensure that your child is achieving and progressing as much as possible. We encourage you to help your child complete the homework set by their class teacher.

There are regular workshops for parents explaining the approaches the school uses for key areas such as phonics, Maths, reading and thinking skills.

Parents are invited in to a range of events across the year. They also have regular opportunities throughout the year to meet with staff to review their child's progress.

Once a year we provide a written report on each child's progress. We pride ourselves on being very approachable and have an open-door policy, so if you are ever concerned about your child's education, please make an appointment at any time with your child's class teacher.



## EYFS

**Our Early Years provision offers an exciting and engaging curriculum where children have opportunities to explore and develop their skills both inside the classroom and in our outdoor learning environment.**

Our children receive consistent support, with their needs met through continuous and enhanced provision, alongside opportunities to explore their individual interests. By spending quality time interacting with our children, we develop positive relationships which enable them to flourish in a safe and nurturing environment. We want children to embark on their journey of becoming lifelong learners, and it is therefore vital for us to enable them to be happy and excited learners who take safe risks and are not afraid to try new things. We support children to develop their independence, so they are able to take charge of their own learning and feel valued throughout their journey with us.

While our children are encouraged to explore and learn through play, we also begin to provide them with the skills they need to become fluent readers and writers in Early Years. We teach reading through 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised', a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We begin teaching phonics in Reception and follow this programme's progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, and master phonics as they move through the school.













# TSAT All Through Education

In Strood, we have created a unique offer for parents and carers; the chance for your child to experience an 'all through' educational journey where they stay with the same family of schools.

We have a number of infant/junior and all-through primaries available in the Strood area and our secondary school, Maritime Academy. Each of our schools have adapted their admissions policies so that parents get a priority preference, when applying for a place in another Thinking School.

All-through education has many potential benefits for your child. First and foremost, our Multi-Academy Trust does have a shared approach to teaching children, a language of learning that is taught and then built upon. This consistency helps to accelerate children's progress as they understand what to do, and how to do it. Indeed, developing metacognition right from the early years has been shown to have a massive effect on young people's learning capacity. In addition, the familiarity is reassuring and helps make changing schools easier.

Secondly, our teachers and leaders work closely together. This means we can design a curriculum that builds on what children already know. Our experienced Headteachers work together to identify and implement strategies that we know will make a massive difference to children's progress in school, confidence and well-being. We are innovative and forward-thinking and work with the local authority to share our good practice, and also to learn from others beyond our Multi-Academy Trust.

Children see us moving between schools and the continuation of our relationships with them helps them to feel a sense of belonging, security and of being looked after.





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The Gordon Children's Academy  
Gordon Road  
Strood  
Rochester  
ME2 3HQ



0333 360 2110



[gordonchildrensacademy.org.uk](http://gordonchildrensacademy.org.uk)



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