

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 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 Gordon, we transform life chances by supporting children to become Gordon Greats- ambitious learners, brave thinkers, confident in themselves, kind friends, and proud of what they achieve together.



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.

Staff know that children get one chance at education and ensure that our curriculum and lessons build sequentially and plan for key learning to be frequently recalled and then built upon. Staff ensure that pupils' time in school is maximised and that learning time is fully utilised.

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 self.

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.

At our school, we celebrate five key habits that guide our pupils to strive for their best every day. These are our Gordon Greats: Ambitious, Brave, Confident, Kind, and Proud. Pupils who consistently demonstrate all of these qualities are recognised and celebrated as *Gordon Great Pupils*.





Thinking

The Gordon Children's Academy is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust - a family of schools united by a shared mission: to transform the life chances of every child and young person. Together, we aim to nurture confident, independent learners who think critically and creatively, and who are ready to thrive in an ever-changing world.

At Gordon, we are proud to champion the Trust's unique approach to education. We believe that a framework of cognitive education is the most effective way to help children achieve their aspirations and unlock their full potential. Our aim is to equip every pupil with the skills they need to become lifelong learners and the tools to take ownership of their thinking, learning, and future.

Metacognition

Central to our Thinking School approach is the development of metacognition- teaching children to think about their own thinking. Through carefully planned opportunities to reflect on how they learn, pupils begin to understand which strategies work best for them and why. This empowers them to take greater responsibility for their learning, set meaningful goals, and approach challenges with resilience and adaptability. By nurturing these metacognitive habits from an early age, we help our children become thoughtful, independent learners who are equipped for success both in school and beyond. To develop meta-cognitive thinking, we embed thinking tools and strategies across our curriculum to help pupils approach challenges with curiosity, clarity, and confidence. Our children develop a toolkit of Thinking Tools including **Thinking Maps**, **De Bono's Thinking Hats**, and **Costa's Habits of Mind**.

These tools are used consistently in every classroom and subject area, helping pupils to organise their thoughts, make deeper connections in their learning, and reflect on their personal growth. We encourage our pupils to apply these tools independently, empowering them to become active, thoughtful learners.

Being Your Best Self

At the heart of our ethos is the principle of Being Your Best Self. We believe that every child has the potential to flourish, and we create a learning environment that nurtures self-belief, ambition, and personal development.

As part of this approach, pupils complete their own Be Your Best Self journal. This provides dedicated time for children to learn about how they learn, exploring topics such as the science of memory, growth mindset, and positive psychology. Through the journal, pupils develop key metacognitive skills and emotional literacy that support both academic progress and personal wellbeing.

Regular opportunities for reflection help pupils to celebrate their successes, identify next steps, and set meaningful goals, empowering them to take ownership of their learning and future.

Nationally Recognised Thinking School

In 2025, The Gordon Children's Academy was proud to be accredited as an Advanced Thinking School by the University of Exeter's School of Education - a national leader in the fields of Metacognition, Thinking Skills, and Creativity.

In a glowing report on our school, the University commented that:

"The Gordon Children's Academy achieves excellent pupil outcomes as demonstrated by a wealth of robust indicators. This is indicative of an educational provision that serves the wider needs of all pupils."

"The Gordon Children's Academy is a school where every individual is encouraged to achieve excellence via the pursuit of the Be Your Best Self (BYBS) agenda. The school's ethos is encapsulated in a very straightforward rubric that includes 'Making Learning Irresistible'. These principles are further illustrated in the 'Gordon Greats'. The Gordon Children's Academy clearly places the individual child at the centre of its work."

"The school has an excellent reputation for supporting pupils through its inclusive pastoral system together with an outstanding extra-curricular and enrichment offering. These achievements reflect the school's drive for sustained holistic development, together with an unwavering commitment to lifelong learning for all."





Our Curriculum

At The Gordon Children's Academy, we believe every child is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum that builds essential knowledge, inspires curiosity, and fosters a lifelong love of learning.

Our curriculum is carefully designed to ensure children learn the key knowledge they need to become well-educated, informed citizens. Subject knowledge is deliberately and thoughtfully planned across all subjects, including local elements such as Medway's rich history and geography. This knowledge is revisited regularly through structured retrieval practice, helping pupils embed and retain their learning over time. We enrich learning across all subjects through carefully planned trips and real-world experiences, bringing the curriculum to life and supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Pupils will have the opportunity to learn and explore:

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

We place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' oracy skills, supporting them to speak clearly, confidently and respectfully across the curriculum. At The Gordon Children's Academy, we strive to make learning irresistible- so that every child arrives at school happy, engaged, and eager to learn. We build on children's natural curiosity by offering a curriculum rich in relevant, hands-on experiences that spark interest, deepen understanding, and inspire a lifelong love of learning.





Enrichment Opportunities

At The Gordon Children's Academy, we are committed to providing every child with a rich variety of experiences that extend beyond the classroom. Alongside curriculum-linked trips and visits, we offer a wide range of opportunities designed to broaden pupils' horizons, nurture their talents, and deepen their understanding of the world.

To ensure our pupils leave us with a wealth of cultural capital, we have developed a Gordon Cultural Passport- a carefully planned collection of experiences that every child will have the opportunity to access during their time with us. From exploring local heritage to experiencing live theatre, music, and sporting events, we aim to inspire curiosity, creativity, and ambition.

These experiences not only support academic learning but also develop confidence, resilience, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our enrichment programme includes activities such as:

- A wide range of after school clubs such as drama, dance, choir, Aim High and Times Tables.
- Coach delivered sports clubs
- A wide range of sports clubs and competitions, including Mini Youth Games
- Theatre trips and visiting workshops
- Whole-school celebrations such as World Book Day
- Activity weeks such as Science Week
- A wide range of school trips and visits linked to curriculum learning
- Sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives
- Pupil voice groups such as Pupil MPs, Sports Leaders and Eco Committee, giving children an opportunity to lead change and represent their peers
- Opportunities to raise money for charitable causes and take part in fundraising events





Artsmark

At The Gordon Children's Academy, as part of our mission to transform life chances, we believe it is our responsibility to build every child's cultural capital by providing rich and varied opportunities to experience and participate in the arts

We want all our pupils to explore culture in its many forms- from visual art and music to drama and literature- and to learn about the world beyond their immediate surroundings. By expanding pupils' cultural knowledge and encouraging them to engage in new, creative experiences, we support their personal development and inspire them to think, feel, and express themselves in new ways.

As part of our commitment to a high-quality arts education, we are proud to be on our Artsmark journey. Artsmark is the only creative quality standard for schools accredited by Arts Council England. It recognises schools that are dedicated to delivering a broad, ambitious, and inclusive arts and cultural curriculum.

We are delighted to have achieved the Silver Artsmark Award, which reflects our strong foundation in creative learning across the school. We are now working towards the next stage of our Artsmark journey, continuing to develop and deepen our arts provision through exciting projects, partnerships, performances, and opportunities for pupil voice in the arts.

Through our work with Artsmark, we are ensuring that creativity, self-expression, and cultural enrichment remain central to our pupils' education.





Parent Involvement

At The Gordon Children's Academy, parents 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 believe that strong partnerships between home and school are key to every child's success. We ask that you work with us to ensure your child is achieving their full potential and encourage you to support them with homework and home learning tasks set by their class teacher. To help you feel confident in supporting your child, we offer regular workshops for parents, covering key areas such as phonics.

We know the importance of keeping you informed about your child's academic progress so as well as the official mid-year written report, we share information on how your child is performing in key academic assessments and are always happy to speak further if you have questions or would like more detail.

We are also proud to be a community-focused school and love to involve families in all elements of school life. Our wonderful PTA plays an active role in ensuring parents are involved with school life, organising events, coffee mornings and fundraising activities throughout the year - and they are always keen to welcome new members! Throughout the year, there are also opportunities to attend showcase assemblies where pupils proudly share their learning, as well as special performances such as Harvest Festival, i-Rock, Dance Club performances, and other celebration events and termly book looks.

We pride ourselves on being approachable and welcoming, with a strong open-door ethos. Members of the Senior Leadership Team are on the gates in the playground at drop off and pick up times so you have the opportunity to ask any questions and get to know us well. If you ever have concerns or would simply like to talk about your child's learning and wellbeing, please do not hesitate to make an appointment with their class teacher. We are always here to support you





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 are continuously supported, and their needs are met through continuous provision, enhanced provision, and the opportunity to explore their 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; 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 all-through primaries available in the Strood area and our secondary school, Maritime Academy. Each of our schools has 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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