

MAKING LEARNING IRRESISTIBLE





WELCOME TO ALL FAITHS CHILDREN'S ACADEMY

All Faiths takes a child first approach to learning, encouraging our students to aspire, challenge and achieve

The needs of the children are always paramount in the life and decision making within a school. We strongly believe in providing the children with exciting, creative and meaningful learning experiences which build their enthusiasm for learning and help them grow and develop positively in a variety of ways. It is crucial to involve the children and their families as partners in their education. I am also keen on building our whole school community which thrives on mutual respect and values positive relationships. I know how vital working in partnership with parents really is for children to find a positive and rewarding experience.

All Faiths takes a child first approach to learning, encouraging our students to aspire, challenge and achieve. We strive to transform the life chances of every child who walks through our doors. We work to provide our children with a safe and nurturing environment, in which they can aim high and develop a love for learning. Our school holds high standards for all members of our community, and everything that we do is motivated by wanting the best for our children.

We believe that children only thrive when they are happy and feel safe in their environment. We therefore make sure that:

- Children are always the priority
- Our lessons are exciting and encourage children to think and learn
- Every child is treated as an individual
- Children learn to respect each other, and to play and learn together

Starting at a new school can be both exciting and daunting, so it is important that both you and your child have all the information you need. You are very welcome to arrange a visit to our school to meet our staff and pupils and get a feel for our friendly school environment.

I look forward to welcoming you at All Faiths Children's Academy!

Alistair Kiff
Head of School
All Faiths Children's Academy

OUR SCHOOL

AFCA is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust. We work closely together on many aspects of education but particularly the teaching and learning of “thinking skills” to enable all our pupils to think deeply and be adaptable to our rapidly changing world. Our children get involved in solving problems, conducting investigations, hypothesising, philosophising and reaching conclusions which can be justified.

We also specialise in teaching deaf children. Our specialist staff help the children to communicate effectively using British Sign Language, Sign Supported English, finger spelling, lip reading and speech – “total communication”. All children will learn British Sign Language as part of our curriculum.

Our staff work closely together to provide a safe, clean, calm and stimulating learning environment for all children. We take learning into the outdoor environment too, with a large field, a copse, a pond and plenty of playground space.

We aim to give all children the very best opportunities to develop their sense of identity and to feel secure.

We want our children to:

- Have high self-esteem – a vital component in being able to be successful
- Enjoy being challenged
- Relish being thinkers and problem solvers
- Work independently and as an effective team member

The adults at school lead by example, respecting the children and each other, valuing different views and establishing relationships which benefit the children. We want your child to develop a positive attitude to learning – to love learning for life!





Literacy

We provide children with opportunities to enjoy books, to learn to read and to learn how to express themselves in writing for a range of purposes and audiences. Most of our cross-curricular work is based around an engaging text.

Behaviour

We will treat you and your child with respect, and we expect the same in return. The adults at the school are friendly, firm and fair, providing a happy, welcoming atmosphere for learning in which everyone: children, parents/carers and staff are polite and considerate. We place a high value on each individual child.

Rights and Responsibilities

Here at AFCA, everyone has the right to:

- Feel safe
- Learn, play and work in an atmosphere that helps us to do our best
- Be treated with respect
- Be valued equally

Everyone has a responsibility to:

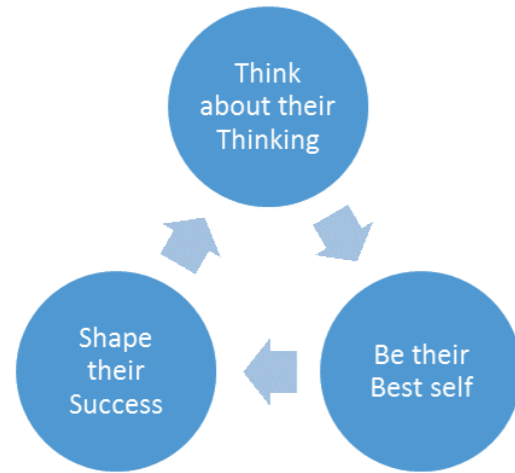
- Behave in a way that makes others feel safe
- Behave in a way which helps everyone to learn, work and play well
- Respect everyone else
- Make a positive contribution to our school community and make others feel valued

The children devise class "Codes of Conduct" which illustrate their rights and responsibilities.

We celebrate behaviours which help everyone to be relaxed and happy.

OUR CURRICULUM

Education is the key to transforming life chances, and we support and develop every member of our community to:



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OUR CURRICULUM

We believe that children learn best when learning is linked in a meaningful way. Our topic-based curriculum is designed to capture children's interests, excite their imagination and provide plenty of first-hand experiences to help them make sense of the world.

The 'Cornerstones' curriculum is the vehicle that supports this approach, which is used to develop links between all areas of the children's learning. Using the Cornerstones half term projects, we want children to engage, develop, innovate and express their learning through a broad range of activities.



AN ACCREDITED THINKING SCHOOL

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, All Faiths 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 children are equipped with a bank of Thinking Tools designed to prepare them for a range of scenarios, dilemmas and circumstances that they may face in life as part of modern society. The use of these Tools in our curriculum is supported by scientific and metacognitive research, and pupils 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 children tremendously in their learning and personal growth.

Our Pupil Drive team are a group of successful young leaders who use the ‘Thinking Tools’ to minute their meetings - describing what is going well and why, what hurdles they have and why and how to improve. These pupils are role models within their year groups, helping to develop the use of cognitive language amongst their peers.

The concept of ‘Being your Best Self’ is also at the heart of our approach to learning at AFCA, 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, we were reaccredited as an Advanced 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:

“Children are consistently encouraged to reflect on their thinking processes, and their ideas to improve and change are taken up by the school.”

All Faiths demonstrates a “focus on pupil voice, independence and empowerment.”

“The school has extensive practices to develop children’s social and emotional attitudes and skills.”

“As a founding member of the Thinking Schools academy Trust, the school is very proactive in disseminating their practice within the Trust.”

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EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Your child's education will already have begun before joining us and continues in our Foundation Stage classes. Children are nurtured through a play-based curriculum, and each class has access to an outdoor area. Reception and Nursery share a large, fenced area and have access to the school grounds. Children develop confidence in themselves and confidence in their ability to learn and achieve.

A significant part of the Foundation Stage is child-initiated play. Children are given opportunities to initiate and choose their own activities and learn through their play. The adults in the setting support their learning by asking questions, joining in, supporting thinking and moving learning forwards. Part of the day is also designated to teacher-led activities, where the teacher has a specific learning objective and will lead an activity to promote learning and help develop a skill.

Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years Framework guides us where the areas of learning are split into prime and specific areas. Within our Nursery, we aim to embed the prime areas (personal, social and emotional development, physical development and language and communication) to secure firm foundations for learning. Through the development of the prime areas, we can then use this firm foundation to enhance learning in the specific areas (literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive art and design).

Each term, we plan for children to undertake memorable experiences which may include visits off the school site or visitors coming into the classroom. These include trainers in to teach the children to ride balance bikes safely, road safety talks, walking trips to the local church and allotments for specific topics.

Our children undertake Forest School sessions led by trained staff in our on-site copse. These sessions allow our pupils to develop their independence, improve their decision-making skills and raise their self-esteem.

FOREST SCHOOL

At Forest School, children have the chance to learn outdoors whatever the weather, planting trees, building shelters, looking for wildlife and generally becoming familiar with the outdoors whilst learning skills they can use throughout their education. Through Forest School, the children develop positive relationships with other people and a strong, positive relationship with the natural world.

Forest School is used all year round, encouraging children to wander through available space, climb trees and build habitats, helping each other to learn and grow whilst being prepared for all weathers. It is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of the children, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

The children get to know the Forest School site well; they are aware of their boundaries and understand what is safe and unsafe. The adult to child ratio means children can safely experience activities such as finding out about fungi and berries, observing mini-beasts or lighting fires and using tools.

Small, manageable tasks are set for children, which they are unlikely to fail and for which genuine praise is given, to boost confidence and self-belief. The Forest School ethos creates an outdoor environment where deep-level learning and progression are the norm. In this way, children are given an excellent foundation for future learning.





ENRICHMENT

Every topic sees the children take part in an educational visit or receive a visitor into school to support their learning in class. Some of these visits use the local area, but our close proximity to the train station allows us to access all that London has to offer too. Educational visits are an important part of what we do at All Faiths, extending the range of experiences that our children can learn from.

Staff regularly volunteer to run after-school clubs which begin at 3:00pm and finish at 4:00pm. Clubs run for 5 weeks per term. A range of clubs are provided for example football, cooking and arts and crafts.

We also offer a wide range of experiences for the children including a residential adventure in Year 4, 5 and in Year 6, workshops, cooking sessions and other valuable life experiences to help bring the learning to life.

We have a traditional school choir: KS2 pupils perform at the 'Young Voices' performance at the O2 each year.

#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, TSAT Rocks Times Tables Challenges and TSATs 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.

ARTS AND CULTURE

As part of our mission to “transform life chances”, 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 child here 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 children’s 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, we are committed to our Artsmark journey, ensuring the cultural and creative education we provide is broad, diverse and engaging.





TREETOPS DEAF PROVISION

All Faiths Children's Academy has a specialist provision for hearing impaired and deaf children. All of our pupils are included in all aspects of school life and our deaf pupils learn alongside their age-related peers in our classrooms.

Deafness in itself is not a barrier to learning; every pupil deserves to have the highest expectations for achievement. Treetops Resource Provision provides support for up to 25 deaf pupils from Nursery to Year 6; all of whom will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a severe to profound hearing loss as their primary need.

We offer a quiet, safe and nurturing Total Communication environment in which pupils can learn and communicate effectively to achieve their goals. Our pupils have full access to a broad and balanced, language-rich curriculum which is differentiated to meet individual need. This ethos ensures the development of the child as a confident individual and independent learner. As a wider school, we teach British Sign Language to all pupils and participate in events such as Sign2Sing and Deaf Awareness Week. We also have strong links with the Ugandan School for the Deaf.

Treetops has a team of highly qualified and experienced staff, including Teachers of the Deaf and Specialist Teaching Assistants, all of whom hold a minimum qualification of British Sign Language Level 2. Mainstream staff are all trained in deaf awareness, with some having trained to levels 1 and/or 2 and we liaise closely with outside agencies such as the Speech and Language Therapy team, Medway Physical and Sensory Service (PASS), Cochlear Implant Centres and Deaf CAMHS. We work in partnership with families to enable all children to thrive and flourish.

Inclusion at All Faiths

We have a dedicated team, committed to transforming life chances for all of our children, regardless of any additional needs. We support children with a wide range of needs, with or without education, health and care plans. We are committed to providing every child with the best opportunities possible in order for them to thrive, despite of any barriers.

ALL THROUGH EDUCATION AT THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST



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 infant/junior and 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.



Jody Murphy
Director of Education



Gun Lane
Strood
Rochester
Kent
ME2 4UF

03333 602100

office@allfaithschildrensacademy.org.uk

www.allfaithschildrensacademy.org.uk

