

MAKING LEARNING IRRESISTIBLE



CEDAR
Children's Academy



WELCOME TO CEDAR CHILDREN'S ACADEMY

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

At Cedar Children's Academy, we strive to transform the life chances of our children, and to make learning irresistible. Cedar Children's Academy is proud to be part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT), a non-profit, charitable trust that has successfully grown over the last few years to include 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.

We believe our greatest asset is our children, and we are proud of their many achievements and their personal development. Our children are encouraged to be their best selves, and to explore their talents and abilities to discover what they enjoy and are good at.

Through the high quality education the children receive and the support and care from school and home, our children leave Cedar with the best possible life chances.

At Cedar, we believe in a strong partnership between the school and parents/carers, benefiting our children with stability and the ability to develop, aspire and achieve. We employ an inspiring workforce who show a relentless dedication to school improvement and encourage our staff and our pupils to be proud of their school and achieve in an exciting environment. We celebrate everyone's success and provide each pupil with the opportunities and nurture they deserve. We are dedicated to delivering the best education and showing care and hope for all our pupils who will become the young adults of the future.

I am immensely proud to be the Headteacher of Cedar Children's Academy and look forward to your support, co-operation and loyalty in sharing our school vision, so that your child's experience at Cedar is rich and unique.



Claire McNally
Head of School

CEDAR ATTRIBUTES

Here at Cedar Children's Academy, we believe that children should be given the best chances possible to unlock their potential. Every child is different and has a range of skills and talents which we enjoy celebrating and helping them to recognise.



Our vision is that our children will acquire the following attributes during their time with us:

- C – Considerate**
- E – Enthusiastic**
- D – Determined**
- A – Assured**
- R – Resilient**

Our focus on these attributes allows us to teach our children the skills they need for success in later life.

Making Learning Irresistible

We aim to make learning irresistible so that your child comes to school every day happy and eager to learn.

Children are naturally curious, and we aim to feed this curiosity with a curriculum that engages, challenges and excites our children.

As an Advanced Thinking School, we teach our children to become creative, analytical, adaptable and resilient thinkers – equipping our children with these thinking skills prepares them for modern day life.

Above all, our greatest goal is to give even the youngest of our children the tools they need to become successful lifelong learners.





OUR CURRICULUM

We believe that children learn best when they are taught in a meaningful way, which is why our topic-based curriculum is designed to capture children’s interest, excite their imagination and ensure everything they learn has a purpose. In this way, we ensure our children are empowered to achieve success.

Children at Cedar are taught according to their developmental level, and every lesson is designed to teach something new, or encourage pupils to practice their skills and apply them to different contexts. Staff are aware that new learning is fragile and build in regular opportunities for retrieval and consolidation. We regularly assess our children across all subjects to ensure they are making good progress and have access to extra support when necessary.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Nursery and Reception follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which consists of three key areas: communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. These are linked to 4 specific subject points: literacy, numeracy, understanding the world, and expressive art and design. We are proud to provide an environment in the foundation stage which is stimulating, engaging and designed to allow children to develop their knowledge and skills through play. It is essential that our children are offered the opportunity to learn and explore both inside and outside to enable them to transfer their skills to a variety of situations.

National Curriculum

Years 1-6 at Cedar follow the National Curriculum, allowing our children to gain a range of knowledge and skills in English, Maths, Science, Computing, History, Geography, Art and Design, Design Technology, Music, Physical Education, French and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PHSE). We also have a statutory duty to teach Relationships and Sex education (RSE). We encourage a cross-curricular approach to ensure secure links between subjects, allowing children to develop their skills in real-life situations.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There are a variety of enriching extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils at Cedar, to enhance their education and provide the fullest possible school experience. School staff run our Breakfast Club which starts at 7.30am and provides the children with the opportunity of a good breakfast to get them set for the day. There is a selection of cereals, toast, fruit and cheese available daily. Children also have the chance to take part in various activities such as puzzles, games, sports and ICT. The children are then escorted by staff to their classrooms, ready to start their day. Outside agencies also run a range of after-school clubs to give our children experiences outside of the classroom. In addition, we have an after-school provision that provides childcare until 5.30pm on the school site, allowing safe and interactive play for those children with working parents. Please see our website for more details on our exciting after-school clubs.

#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.

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, Cedar 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 children 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 Cedar, 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, Cedar Children’s Academy was re-accredited 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:

*“Pupils at Cedar Children’s Academy have an history of **high achieving** in a holistic sense and so the school has an **enviable reputation.**”*

*“The focus on the **development of the whole child** is a particularly strong aspect of school life at Cedar.”*

*“The school and Trust have a very visible and **strong ethos**, in which all pupils are encouraged to develop as **articulate, critical, creative and reflective thinkers.**”*





BEHAVIOUR AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

At Cedar, we believe children learn best in a safe, calm and well-organised environment. In order to maintain this, we expect purposeful and self-disciplined behaviour from our children.

We want every child within our school to feel happy, secure and confident. We have the highest expectations in learning, behaviour, and attitude, and encourage the children to develop the same beliefs in their own potential and pride in their achievements. Our Cedar attributes, school rules and behaviour expectations are consistently promoted within the classroom and in other areas of the school. We emphasise positive behaviour and together strive to make our environment enjoyable and rewarding. Whole school systems are in place to recognise success, emphasise praise and celebrate our various achievements. We celebrate academic success and effort, hard work, and contributions to the school community.



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Our Early Years Foundation Stage is a place where happy children are motivated to learn through a combination of high-quality teaching and child-initiated time. Our children learn through play, discovery and exploration, and in this way, learning is made irresistible.

We strive to create an exciting and interesting indoor and outdoor learning environment for our children. Through nurturing relationships, every child has an equal opportunity to learn, receive support when necessary and have their learning enhanced and progressed by experienced adults. We aim to instil a love of stories and learning in all our children. The children are confident, engaged and have opportunities to enhance their physical development, communication skills, be able to regulate themselves, learn about the world we live in, be artistic and learn the academic skills of reading, writing and maths.





ARTSMARK

As part of Cedar Children’s Academy’s 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.

In order to offer a full and enriching experience which builds cultural capital, Cedar has committed to our Artsmark journey, ensuring the cultural and creative education we provide is broad, diverse and engaging.

Every student at Cedar 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.



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.



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Director of Education



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