

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: All Faiths Children's Academy

Gun Lane, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4UF

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of school is Andrew Kershaw. This school is part of the Thinking Schools Academy 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), Stuart Gardner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gerard Newman. Kirstie Jones is responsible for this and one other school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils show pride in belonging to their school. They actively uphold values such as kindness. Pupils take responsibility for creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels accepted. They are proud of their 'buddy bench' where they can go to make new friends. Staff establish clear routines that help pupils feel safe. Pupils trust staff to support them when needed. Parents and carers report that the school helps their children become confident and resilient while fostering a love of learning.

The school has high expectations for what pupils will learn and achieve. However, some pupils do not receive the precise help they need to achieve their full potential in lessons. Pupils enjoy learning as teachers make lessons engaging and fun. All pupils learn a broad curriculum, including British Sign Language. This enables pupils, including deaf pupils, to play and interact with each other during social times and lessons.

Celebrations such as 'Earth Day' help pupils to appreciate nature and take care of their mental health. Workshops with the local police service help pupils understand the important role they play in the community. A vast array of trips enriches pupils' education and extends their cultural awareness.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced significant leadership changes. This period of unsettledness has resulted in some pupils not learning as well as they should. This is reflected in how achievement in national tests has declined.

The new leadership team, supported by the trust and governors, has taken decisive action to overcome these barriers and improve pupils' achievement. Some of this work is in its early stages. While the school quickly and accurately identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), inconsistent support for some pupils continues to affect how well they learn and achieve.

Staff teach phonics in a structured and systematic way. They typically help pupils match sounds with letters effectively. They provide pupils with prompt, targeted support when needed. More pupils now read with greater fluency and confidence. However, in some lessons, the school does not give pupils who are still learning to read enough literacy support. These pupils often lack the reading and spelling knowledge to complete their work. They make mistakes that the school does not consistently address. This limits pupils' learning and their ability to practise essential reading and writing skills accurately.

Across the school, teachers deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. They sequence lessons to help pupils make meaningful connections between linked ideas. In some lessons, checks on pupils' understanding lack sufficient precision or consistency. Teaching can move on before pupils have confidently grasped new knowledge. Staff do not use information about what pupils already know to adapt subsequent learning to meet their needs and help them securely learn important knowledge. For some pupils, including pupils with SEND, this limits how well they achieve.

Skilled staff in 'Tree Tops' provide deaf pupils with expert support in lessons. This enables pupils to engage fully in school life and achieve well both academically and personally. The school actively promotes positive deaf role models so that all pupils learn that disability is not a barrier to success.

When children join the school in the early years, staff build positive relationships with them and their families. This means staff quickly identify children with SEND and provide targeted help that enables them to learn. Children learn to negotiate the rules of games, which develop and extend their thinking skills. They make a positive start to their education.

Most pupils attend very well as they do not want to miss out on learning. The school works supportively with families and professionals to overcome barriers to attendance. The school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils understand what staff expect of them. They strive for rewards like the 'golden tie'. Pupils typically focus during lessons and give their best efforts.

Staff help pupils build confidence and resilience by encouraging them to be brave and learn from mistakes. Pupils aim to 'be their best self' and build positive relationships

grounded in respect. They learn to take care of their health and be safe in the community. Pupils in 'Tree Tops' contribute to raising national awareness of being a deaf child through publishing books for other children. The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils benefit from the wide and extensive club offer in place.

The school's shared vision continues to drive improvement priorities. Governors and trustees know the school well. They visit regularly to ensure leaders' actions remain focused and effective in moving the school forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, the staff do not provide pupils with the precise support they need to address gaps in their phonics knowledge. Some pupils do not learn to read and spell as rapidly or accurately as they should. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to identify and address these gaps quickly so that pupils read and spell with fluency and confidence across the curriculum.
- Checks on pupils' understanding of the curriculum content are not consistently precise. This limits the school's ability to accurately identify what pupils know so that it can build on their knowledge securely. The school should develop its assessment practices so that it can better identify what pupils know and what they need to do next, before moving them on too quickly.
- In some lessons, the school does not use information about pupils' SEND needs or starting points to adapt teaching effectively. Consequently, learning for these pupils is not consistently designed to enable them to achieve their full potential. The school must ensure teachers have the expertise they need to adapt learning based on pupils' different starting points and needs so that all pupils learn well and are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give

graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138182
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10379861
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerard Newman
CEO of the trust	Stuart Gardner
Headteacher	Kirstie Jones (Executive Headteacher) Andrew Kershaw (Head of School)
Website	www.allfaithschildrensacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.
- The school has on-site Nursery provision for three- to four-year-old children.
- The school has specially resourced provision for deaf pupils. 'Treetops' provides education and support for 14 deaf pupils. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been several changes in leadership since the last inspection. The executive headteacher took up her post in March 2022. During this time, there has also been a change to the head of school. The current head of school took up post in September 2023 as a deputy head, promoted to head of school in April 2025. The assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2024.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff, pupils, representatives from the board of governors, including the chair of governors, the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils reading to an adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments, took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body and trustee meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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