



**Rose Ayling-Ellis**

**Rose Lucinda Ayling-Ellis** (born 17 November 1994) is a British actress. Deaf since birth, she is a British Sign Language user. She is known for playing Frankie Lewis in the BBC soap opera *EastEnders* (2020–present). In 2021, she became the first deaf contestant on *Strictly Come Dancing*, and with professional Giovanni Pernice, won the nineteenth series.

Rose was born in Shepway, Kent and grew up in Hythe. She was born deaf. As a child, she took part in a filming weekend run by the National Deaf Children's Society. During the weekend, she met deaf film director Ted Evans, who later cast her in his award-winning short film *The End*. She then applied to Deafinitely Youth Theatre.

She has taken part in a number of stage productions, including *Mother Courage* (Royal Exchange); *Faith, Hope and Charity* R&D (National Theatre) and *Hérons Workshop* (Lyric Hammersmith). Her television credits include *Summer of Rockets* and *Casualty*. She appeared in *The Vamps* music video for "Middle of the Night", and in the short film *Almost* with Vilma Jackson. Since 2020, Rose has been playing Frankie Lewis in the BBC soap opera *EastEnders*. Her character was originally written by the deaf journalist and scriptwriter Charlie Swinbourne.



Rose Ayling-Ellis has been instrumental in creating a powerful change in attitudes through the beauty of her dancing. Rose Ayling-Ellis winning *Strictly Come Dancing* is a landmark moment for the deaf community.

People often say to deaf people: “Oh, you can’t do that – because you’re deaf.” Rose has shown that deaf people can do anything – dancing,



acting and plenty more. Why shouldn't they? Rose said on the show, “it’s a joy to be deaf”. She feels it is a joy to be part of the wonderful community and to use British Sign Language (BSL) – both to communicate with other deaf people but also, as her dance partner, Giovanni Pernice, has shown by embracing BSL, as a way for deaf and hearing people to work together.

The deaf community's ideal vision of a perfect world is hearing people communicating with them using sign language, while employing all aspects of deaf awareness: eye contact and clear lip patterns, too. The BSL have witnessed a surge in interest in learning sign language since Rose appeared on *Strictly*. It's amazing that one person has raised the profile so effectively.



Following on from the television show, Rose has successfully campaigned for the *Strictly Come Dancing live UK tour* to have British Sign Language interpreters at every show. For each of the 33 shows across the UK, producers are providing a registered interpreter who will appear on two large screens either side of the stage, meaning deaf



people can sit almost anywhere in the venues and fully enjoy the event. It will be the UK's first arena touring show that will have a BSL interpreter at every performance.





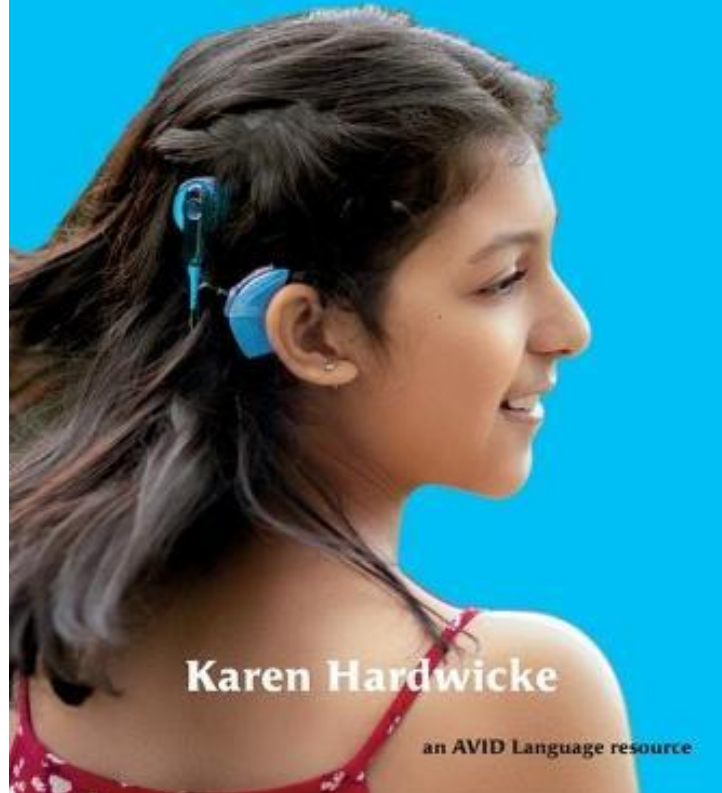
Rose Ayling-Ellis has also called for BSL to be given legal status in the UK. Although BSL was recognised as a language in its own right by the government in 2003, it has no legal protection. Ayling-Ellis, 27, said she had spoken to Labour MP Rosie Cooper about her Bill in Parliament, which aims to declare BSL as an official language of the UK.

Rose explained "I have heard so many stories about deaf people going to a doctor appointment and they ask for an interpreter and they don't refer them an interpreter, so they end up needing their child to translate, or a family member. That shouldn't be. Because it's not an official language, we can't do anything about it."

With the help of MP Rosie Cooper, it's passed the first stage but it has to go through the second stage at the end of January and then one further stage before it can become an official language.



# A Girl like Ananya



Here at Kendrick School, we are lucky enough to have our own inspiring student who is deaf and wears cochlear implants – **Ananya**, who is currently in Year 7.

Just like Rose Ayling-Ellis, **Ananya** has not let her hearing impairment stop her from living life to the full and achieving many wonderful things.

Ananya likes to play netball and the piano. She also agreed to be the subject of this book which explains to other children that Ananya is more than ‘just a deaf girl’. The book could also inspire other children who are deaf to go on and achieve their goals and not let their hearing impairment stop them.