



At St Francis' CofE (Aided) Junior School we aim to inspire creativity, participation and individual/collaborative thinking through a range of P4C experiences. We have created a curriculum and climate founded on enquiry. Research has shown that "the amount and quality of dialogue which children experience in the early years is one of the best predictors of their eventual academic achievement" (Hart and Risley, 1995).

In order to create this climate of enquiry, it is vital that children learn how to question effectively. "The answer matters no less than the question, and the oral springboard for learning is what we do with what children say" (Robin Alexander, 2004)

Aims

P4C focuses on thinking skills and communal dialogue ('philosophising'), and aims to build a "community of enquiry" defined as: a group of people used to thinking together with a view to increasing their understanding and appreciation of the world around them and of each other.

Within this community of enquiry participants develop four key types of thinking:

- Collaborative: thinking with others
- Caring: thinking of others
- Critical: making reasoned judgements
- Creative: creating new ideas

As well as promoting higher order thinking skills, P4C develops the pupils' ability to articulate their thoughts using mature vocabulary in both speaking and in writing. This has a significant impact on their development as speakers, writers and citizens. It teaches durable and transferrable thinking skills which have impact across the curriculum and allow pupils to make links between their learning.

P4C is an integral part of the school's curriculum and is a powerful tool in developing our pupils both academically and personally.

Objectives

The teaching of P4C will enable children to:

- listen to and value the opinions of others
- respond to, encourage and build on the ideas of others
- make connections between ideas and speculate on alternative explanations
- be independent and adaptable in their thinking
- ask philosophical questions
- seek clarification, justification and supporting evidence
- evaluate the ideas and viewpoints of others

P4C curriculum planning

P4C is planned by the teaching teams on a weekly basis. Each week two skills for development are selected according to the needs of the class. Learning opportunities to develop these skills are planned for and a relevant and engaging stimulus for the enquiry is selected.

Teachers then consider the key concepts that may arise from the stimulus and plan for opportunities to challenge thinking. Cross curricular links are planned for where relevant in order to immerse pupils more fully in their learning.

At St Francis' we understand that the prime areas are fundamental to children's successful learning in the specific areas. The specific areas cannot be encountered in isolation from communication and language or personal, social, emotional and physical development since children always experience the world through communication and physical and sensory involvement. To give children the best opportunities for effective development in these areas staff will plan for:

- stimuli that encourage critical thinking and discussion
- an environment that stimulates children's natural curiosity
- adult support in helping children communicate and record orally and in other ways
- opportunities to observe, assess and plan the next steps in their own and peers learning

Weekly enquiries last from 30 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes depending on the age and maturity of the children. A ten step process is outlined (appendix 1) to ensure consistency of approach and clear expectations for pupils, although all ten steps do not necessarily need to be covered in one session. For example, a teacher may decide to provide the main question whilst focusing on developing other skills or sessions may be split into two 30 minute blocks.

Once this process has become embedded, creativity in delivering P4C is encouraged to ensure it remains an enjoyable and engaging part of our curriculum for all. The teacher takes on the role of facilitator (appendix 2) in order to support and challenge the children in their thinking, reasoning and dialogue and ensure these are of a high quality. The facilitator guides the group towards a better understanding of the issue discussed and supports reflection on the effectiveness of the enquiry.

Links to Other Areas of the Curriculum

P4C impacts significantly on all areas of the curriculum as it develops the critical thinking skills of pupils. This allows pupils to make connections between their learning experiences and apply higher order thinking skills across the curriculum.

English: P4C contributes significantly to the development of skills in spoken language in our school by actively promoting the skills of speaking and listening. Through philosophical enquiry children are provided with regular opportunities to make progress against all the statutory requirements for spoken language outlined in the National Curriculum. P4C also promotes standards in writing by broadening the understanding of and range of vocabulary available to the children and developing their ability to articulate and justify their ideas clearly to the reader. Reading skills are used as part of P4C as children need to recall, infer and deduce information about a stimulus, the opinions of others and of their own thoughts.

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) : P4C makes a significant contribution to the teaching of PSHCE. P4C gives children opportunities to explore moral dilemmas, debate and discuss key issues. By developing their skills as caring thinkers they learn to value and respect the views of others even if they disagree with them. Children also learn to show sympathy towards others, take turns and encourage participation from all members of the community.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: P4C offers children many opportunities to examine some of the bigger questions in life. It allows children to explore the definitions of concepts and consider what they mean to

them personally. This allows children to develop their own beliefs and values which creates confident individuals who can express themselves articulately.

Whilst P4C enquiries that have cross curricular links can allow children to deepen their views and insight gain into other subjects, it is important that it remains a “true enquiry” through which pupils can explore ideas and does not become a vehicle used for delivering content.

Resources

The subject leaders:

- Supports class teachers and develops the school P4C resources to support and enhance the learning and teaching of P4C
- Have a budget allocated to ensure the best value for learning, through a careful action planning
- Are Level 2a trained in order to support other teachers with resources, skills, knowledge and pedagogy
- Are given allocated time, through a bid to HT, to ensure that the impact of P4C is maintained and increased e.g. carry out and act on pupil voice facilitated to ensure that pupil voice takes place to further develop the teaching and learning of P4C

Role of the Subject Leader

It is the responsibility of the P4C leaders (Mrs Lakey and Mrs Wright) to monitor the quality and teaching in P4C. The subject leaders are also responsible for supporting colleagues in their facilitation of P4C and provide a strategic lead and direction for P4C in school.

Recording and Review

Teachers will ensure all P4C enquiries are noted in the children’s P4C books and time is given to individuals for reflection. Reviewing an enquiry (process and content) is part of the 10 step model.

Effective Monitoring

The P4C leaders will look at displays and class P4C books to ensure high quality questions and enquiries are taking place, reporting findings to SLT.

Link to Other School Policies

The P4C policy links closely to the English and PSHCE policies

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