



# Holy Trinity Church of England (Aided) Primary School

## Curriculum Rationale

### Philosophy for Children (P4C)

#### *The Best for Every Child - a Unique Child of God*

*See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children — and so, in fact, we are*  
(1 John 3:1)

#### **Intent**

Cookridge Holy Trinity aims for the pupils to enhance their ability to think, communicate their thoughts effectively, improve their listening skills and become comfortable not only working collaboratively, but also having healthy disagreements with others as well. This is not limited to discrete sessions, but a part of our cross-curricular, topic-based learning approach.

Philosophy for Children is a way to enhance thinking and communication skills, give opportunities for children to engage with their spiritualities and work collaboratively to clarify their thinking. Philosophy for Children is not so much a subject, but more an overarching principle that is applied throughout the curriculum. The discrete skills taught in our P4C lessons are utilised regularly within other subjects around the curriculum, where children will be challenged to disagree, to rank, to reframe questions and work together to reach a consensus. The school's delivery of P4C is underpinned by James Nottingham's work around 'The Learning Pit', and the associated 'Learning Challenge' which provides resources to teachers. This work aims to create 'cognitive conflict', whereby two different thoughts will appear, and the thinker will have to make sense of them. P4C aims to create cognitive conflict throughout the curriculum, in a way which is accessible to the children, as well as engaging and fun.

One of the main aims of P4C is to enhance the ability for children to use 'exploratory talk'. This is 'characterised by longer exchanges and use of questions, reflection, explanation and speculation.' This is designed to enhance creativity and 'make full use of critical thinking'. Another aim is for children to be able to make sense of abstract concepts, such as 'justice', 'fairness', or 'luck' and discuss these fluently either with a talk partner or a whole group. There are a range of activities provided to stimulate discussion and the children given opportunity to communicate during lessons.

#### **Implementation**

Because of the overarching nature of the subject, the curriculum is less prescriptive than others, as teachers are expected to embed it within their planning of RE, Maths, English and Science, as well as Topic lessons, including, but not limited to, Geography and History. Children's progress should be observed in their ability to communicate, an improved clarity in their writing, their overall relationships with peers and ability to control their emotions. There are suggested guidelines for the year groups and some sample lessons, but equally teachers are encouraged to use contemporary events to keep the learning relevant for the children.

#### **Reception**

The foundations for P4C are built in Reception, through topics such as 'You', where children discuss their similarities and differences between themselves and their peers. Accessing deeper thinking through timetabled 'circle time' sessions with their key workers e.g. – would you rather questions and developing their retelling and communicating skills through sessions such as 'Show and Tell'. Each topic in Reception is based around the

children's interests - the children create big questions for each topic often based around the world around them and together they work and play to explore them deeper. EYFS has a huge focus on communication, developing listening and attention, speaking and understanding skills – articulating their likes, dislikes, thoughts and opinions. These skills are linked to the new Early Year Curriculum Goals 'A Communicator' including "to ask relevant questions" and "to express knowledge, ideas and feelings". Philosophy for children is being applied perpetually at this stage.

### **Year One/ Year Two**

As with reception, P4C is something which is present throughout the curriculum in Key Stage 1. Children are taught turn taking, basic communication, memories, ordering events and story-telling. P4C lessons will challenge them to think deeper into questions, and begin to ask questions deeper questions to encourage the children to begin to find their spirituality. Cognitive conflict is made with questions designed to make children think. Asking lessons for children at this age can include justifying their own opinion, where children are asked to explain their thoughts and feelings. Stand-alone lessons can include 'How do you explain...' where children look at the different scenarios and explain their reasoning. Other lessons look at responsibility and how it can be shared, as well as concepts such as 'saying sorry'.

In year one, children look at the properties of materials and start to refine their thinking by finding different ways to make objects the odd one out.

### **Year Three/Year Four**

Lower Key Stage 2 builds upon the skills learnt by children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 by presenting the children with more complex problems to think about, which help to create a higher level of cognitive conflict. One such activity would be asking children to rank 9 cards in order, with one as the most important and one as the least important. Suggested lessons include 'Why explore?' looking at exploration as a concept, underpinning the Year 3 topic of 'Adventurers and Explorers', as well as 'What is treasure?' linking to topics of Ancient Egypt for year 4.

Children are also introduced to concept maps (this involves unpicking concepts into their component parts), concept targets and opinion lines at this stage, and they are used in a wide variety of lessons and contexts. Gaining a clear definition of words, we use as a cognitive exercise is also applied, such as 'what is the difference between a hat and a helmet?'

Again, at this stage, children will use P4C as a window into their spirituality, as they are asked to think about wider issues about the world and beyond. RE and P4C are intertwined in this respect, with key questions from RE having basis in P4C.

### **Year Five/ Year Six**

Again, Upper Key Stage 2 build upon the knowledge and skills acquired further down the school, by increasing the cognitive load and therefore cognitive conflict. Children are asked to go into the Learning Pit on many issues, and the chance to embrace spirituality is often present. P4C has strong links to all of the topics, from Year 6's World War 2 and the chance to look at the morality of people following orders, to Year 5's Earth and Space Topic, where children are invited to consider the universe as whole, and their place within it. Children are expected to use exploratory talk to solve a wide range of issues across different subjects, and consider the real-life application of Philosophy for Children, such as making changes within school and the community. The P4C questions are embedded into the whole curriculum and although not always taught as a discreet session, they are used consistently in all teaching to further develop and deepen the children's understanding.

Year 5 also discuss the actions of both Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks in close detail in their studies of American civil rights discussing the concepts of equality and entitlement.

### **Whole School P4C 2021-2022**

Whole school worship will often be a time where Philosophy for Children is incorporated or linked. Children are asked to reflect upon, or think about a statement as they enter or exit the hall.

## **Impact**

By the time children leave Holy Trinity, they are more confident and willing to express their own opinions and feelings to others. The P4C questioning supports children to be good communicators, delivering their thoughts effectively. The children have brilliant listening skills and are more comfortable to work collaboratively with their peers. As the teaching is not limited to discrete sessions, children apply these skills to everyday context, not just in the classroom.