



Philosophy Policy

We actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and respect those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

Introduction

This policy will outline the rationale, aims, and processes for teaching high quality Philosophy lessons and the benefits that regular Philosophy lessons bring.

Rationale

Including Philosophy in the curriculum reaps many benefits. Numerous studies point to the positive, far-reaching effects of having regular Philosophy lessons. Direct evidence shows raised attainment in Maths and Reading, as well as acquired skills that can be applied across the curriculum. However, its greater strengths are applied across the curriculum through the skills acquired in Philosophy lessons. Carried out regularly as part of the timetable, it has positive effects on emotional awareness and thinking skills; it encourages enquiry and questioning, as well as respect of one's own opinion and those of others. It can aid confidence and reduce the fear of 'getting it wrong'. The many benefits will help to equip our pupils with valuable and rewarding skills, which are essential for a fulfilling life.

Aims of the Philosophy Lesson

Academic and Empowering

- To develop an enquiry-based lesson in order to open up children's learning through the exploration of ideas.
- To develop skills of enquiry, investigation and analysis.
- To develop the knowledge of and evaluate, different types of questions.
- To develop caring, creative, collaborative and critical thinking skills.
- To encourage questioning and individual opinion as well as open discussion and debate.
- To be able to summarise by abstracting key points or general rules from a number of ideas or instances.
- To learn the skills of clear thinking so that ideas can be explained and good reasons given for views held.
- To expand ideas by sustaining and extending lines of thought and argument.
- To empower pupils to think for themselves.
- To give all learners (including teachers) the opportunity to genuinely enquire and think outside the box.
- To grow intelligence and contribute to raising standards of attainment.

Emotional, Social and Behavioural

- To create a caring and collaborative space where children feel valued and their ideas are respected and tolerated by all present, which will lead to higher levels of self-esteem and intellectual confidence.
- To give children a greater sense of worth by seeing that their ideas have value and that others have different ideas that have value too.
- To realise that they do not always have to be right and to have a chance to speak and be heard without the fear of getting an answer wrong.

Planning

Individual lesson plans are used. These include starter activities, the use of different stimuli, and philosophical questions formed by the children.

As each Philosophy session is a space for pupils to think freely and often drive the discussion in a direction of their choice, we do not set objectives that have to be met. When objectives are set, it risks becoming a lesson where the teacher is looking for the pupils to grasp a message, or knowledge, by the end. Each Philosophy for Children (P4C) session is invaluable in so many respects, and is rarely predictable.

In Prep and in Pre-Prep each class is allocated one period of Philosophy per week on a half termly rota with RS. Philosophy is taught by the Philosophy teacher, using the Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach.

Teaching and Learning

Lesson Approach

The lessons are enquiry based and focus around a stimulus or central question/ theme which is explored throughout the lesson. The teacher facilitates the lesson but the direction of the lesson is very much led by the children's responses and ideas. All session plans will have a number of sections which will include two or more of the following: a starter activity, the stimulus, forming and sharing questions, conducting an 'Enquiry', a final round. The children are encouraged to listen to and respond to the points being made.

Layout

For the lesson, the children are organised into a circle shape with the teacher/facilitator part of the circle so that everyone can see each other. This formation sets the Philosophy lesson apart from other lessons. The children may sit on chairs or on the floor, but all children do the same thing. The children may move around within the circle, but the lesson will usually begin and end in a circle formation.

Inclusion

It is important that all children have the opportunity to speak and share their ideas. The teacher ensures, through various and appropriate strategies, that everyone can share their point of view at some point during the lesson. These strategies might include sticks with names on, a 'speak when you have the toy' resource, going around the circle etc. Everyone will share their view at least once in the lesson. Children who are more reluctant to share, should be gently encouraged and all children are reminded of the importance of listening and looking at the speaker and responding in a friendly way, even if they disagree.

Differentiation and Extension

Every child is encouraged to extend and refine their ideas by the questioning of other pupils and by the teacher. They are encouraged to not dwell on their point if the conversation has moved on, but instead listen to and respond to the points being made at the present time.

In Philosophy, differentiation occurs through both outcome and through altered questioning. The teacher will direct the 'Enquiry' so that each child will be stretched in their thinking.

Strategies for Recording and Reporting

Termly Reviews are written by the Head of Department in this subject and this informs future planning and summarises and assesses the teaching and learning.

Reports are sent to parents at the end of the Summer Term. The report focuses on

- attitude to Philosophy
- competence in Philosophical thinking ability.

Assessment

Assessment grid sheets are completed for each child on a termly basis. These are found in the V3 folder using the assessment criteria found in the HOD folder under the title 'Assessment Criteria'.

Each child in Pre-Prep and Prep completes a self-reflection/assessment at the end of each unit of Philosophy. This assessment is built into the planning as the last lesson of the unit. These assessments are kept by the Philosophy teacher, so that children may compare their thinking/attitude across the year as a whole.

Formative assessment is carried out on an ongoing basis by the teacher and this informal teacher judgement will alter and affect the speed and direction of the current lesson, as well as of future lessons. Due to the nature of the lesson, there is no requirement to record this.

Philosophy around the School

Each Friday, there is a question which will appear in the Friday Notes. Families or individuals are encouraged to share their thoughts with each other.

Philosophy across the Curriculum

There is vast scope for Philosophy to be included in lessons across the curriculum. Training has been carried out in this area so that staff feel confident in including enquiry-based activities in their regular lessons.

Training

There have been two whole school training days in 2016 to prepare and train the staff to teach Philosophy. One was an observation day, where staff observed Philosophy lessons led by Tom Bigglestone (Lead Trainer at The Philosophy Man), as he taught Philosophy lessons throughout the school. The other was an INSET training day in September 2016, also led by Tom Bigglestone, who trained and prepared all staff for the teaching of Philosophy lessons.

The needs of staff will be assessed and further training will be implemented accordingly.

PH attended a two-day Philosophy for Children (P4C) course in January 2019 in view of taking over as the new Head of the Philosophy Department. Feedback was then provided for staff.

PH has also attended several on-line 'Philosofuns' training sessions, which have provided the resources to plan Philosophy lessons for Pre-Prep.

Reviewed: June 2022, June 2023, September 2023, June 2024

Next Review: June 2025

Person Responsible: Miss Penny Hall (Head of Philosophy)