



Philosophy for Children (P4C) at Gallions

We have been running weekly 'philosophical enquiries' at Gallions for over ten years now. All of the teachers and the majority of the support staff in Gallions have been specially trained in how to 'facilitate' philosophical discussions and have completed the SAPERE Level 1 training. We have a rolling programme to train all of our teaching staff to Level 2 on a rolling programme.

We began by piloting P4C in a Year 4 and a Year 1 class. After witnessing the incredible impact that P4C had on these two classes, P4C was introduced in all classes from Year 1 to Year 6. Once P4C was firmly embedded across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, it was introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children now begin their P4C journey when they join us in the Nursery at 3 years old and continue up until the day they leave us to go on to secondary school.

P4C is timetable in every class just as any other curriculum subject is. So, every child in every class across the school has the opportunity to engage in philosophical enquiry on a weekly basis.

We feel that having a whole school approach to P4C means that the principles of P4C are deeply rooted in all of our practice, not just in the weekly hour of P4C and that they underpin all that we do at Gallions.



Context: Gallions Primary School and the Surrounding Area

Gallions Primary School opened in September 1999 on the Winsor Park Estate in Newham, East London. It is a community school for all children aged 3 to 11 years.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies Newham as the 11th most deprived area in the country and the 4th most deprived in London. The Winsor Park Estate is one of the poorest areas in Newham, consisting of 95% social housing.

- The school has a diverse ethnic intake with over 60 different languages being spoken by the pupils and staff.
- There are a large number of refugee families.
- 38% of the pupils at the school are entitled to free school meals, compared with a national average of 16.8% per school.
- 29% of the pupils have Special Educational Needs. The Newham average is 18.3% per school.

Despite these huge barriers, the school is determined that both children and adults in the local community will be successful and will benefit from the opportunities that Gallions will give them. P4C works in tandem with the school's vision of the importance of the arts in educating young people. We believe that everyone is capable of participating successfully in the arts.

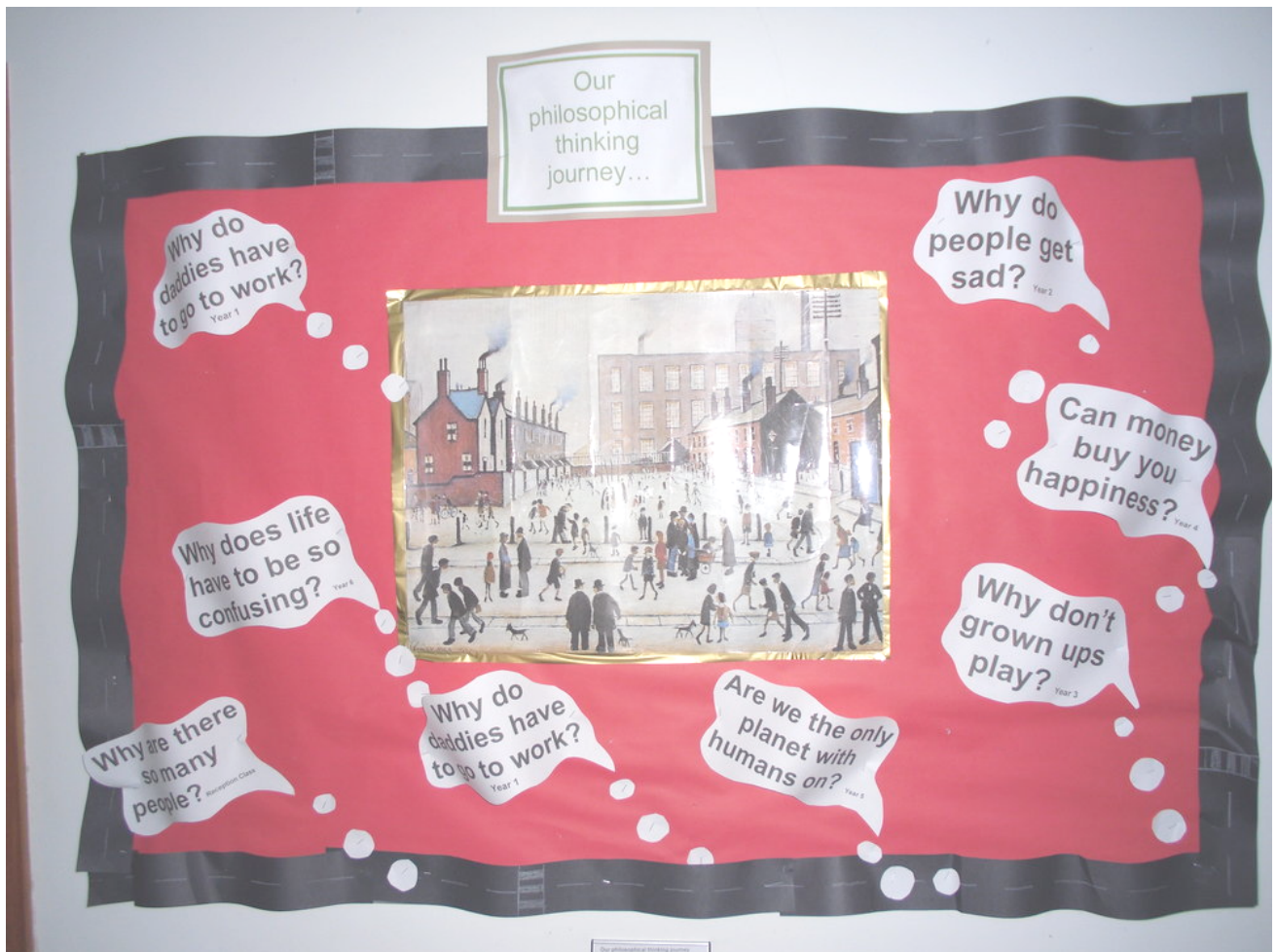
So, how does it work?

The class teacher chooses a different stimulus each week, which is used as a starting point for a special kind of group discussion, sometimes called the 'community of enquiry'. The stimulus could be a story or picture book, a piece of artwork, a piece of music or an object or artefact. The children then formulate questions about the stimulus, vote for one of the questions that they would like to discuss, discuss the chosen question and then in the 'final word' session, review the enquiry and discuss ways to improve both their individual contributions and those as a group.

The children's choices dominate the session and the teacher takes on the role of a 'guide' rather than being the source of all knowledge. The teacher ensures that everybody has a chance to speak, who wishes to, and that the discussion runs well. Everything the children say is listened to but they have to be prepared to back up their point with examples and justifications.

We feel that running weekly P4C sessions has had a huge impact on both the way children learn and the way teachers teach. The sessions give the children a chance to share their feelings and to talk about their fears, joys and what is important to them. The sessions also help children develop their thinking skills and to look at different ways to express their opinions. We also feel that children's self-esteem has risen as a result of P4C, as they become generally more thoughtful and articulate. The children's speaking and listening skills also develop and their range of vocabulary and grammar is widened.

We regularly run whole school enquiries, where every class in the school uses the same stimulus. The questions posed by the children are collected and displayed in a central place for all children to access.



This Lowry painting was used as a stimulus for was a whole school enquiry done in October 2011. The voted for by each year group were then displayed around it.

Reception: Why are there so many people?
Year 1: Why do daddies have to go to work?
Year 2: Why do people get sad?
Year 3: Why don't grown-ups play?
Year 4: Can money buy you happiness?
Year 5: Are we the only planet with humans on?
Year 6: Why does life have to be so confusing?

Overall, we feel that running weekly P4C sessions has made a huge, huge difference to the children and the teachers in our school. Children have the time and a place to discuss things that are important to them on a weekly basis and teachers have time to really listen to the children.

We now share our practice in P4C through a range of training courses and events, and through a set of DVDs showing classroom practice. Details below

www.gallions.newham.sch.uk via www.thephilosophyman.com