



Gulf British Academy

# Philosophy for Children

## Whole School Approach

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## Introduction

At Gulf British Academy we strive to help our pupils to be effective, **critical** and **creative** thinkers and to take responsibility for their own learning in a **caring** and **collaborative** environment. These "4C's" are central to the values and practice of Philosophy for Children at GBA and are developed not only in Philosophy for Children lessons, but in all areas of school life.

### The 4C's of Philosophy for Children

**Caring Thinking:** listening (concentrating) and valuing (appreciating) e.g. showing interest in, and sensitivity to others' experiences and values.

**Collaborative Thinking:** responding (communicating) and supporting (conciliating) e.g. build on each other's ideas, shaping common understandings and purposes.

**Critical Thinking:** questioning (interrogating) and reasoning (evaluating) e.g. seeking meaning, evidence, reasons, distinctions and good judgements!

**Creative Thinking:** connecting (relating) and suggesting (speculating) eg providing comparisons, examples, criteria, alternative explanations or concepts.

In Philosophy for Children (P4C) pupils are encouraged to ask questions and find the answers through discussion, thereby developing the ability to recognise differences and explore these constructively.

P4C strengthens children's understanding and speaking and listening skills in an environment, referred to as a "community of enquiry", where they feel that they have the freedom to explore ideas and ask questions.

## P4C lessons

P4C lessons at GBA take the form of either a P4C enquiry (or a part of one), or a Thinking Skills activity that's been designed to enhance a relevant 4Cs related skill, such as "developing concepts".

In a typical P4C session, especially for older pupils (Year 3 upwards), the teacher will follow a **10-step sequence of enquiry** during which children are given a "stimulus" such as a story or picture book, and create their own questions in response. They seek out philosophical questions (I Wonder Questions), ones that involve important ideas, or Big Ideas, about which people can have different views such as;

*"Is it ever right to tell tales on a friend?" or "How do you tell if something is beautiful?"*

Children will then vote for the one they think will lead to the most fruitful discussion. Once the question is chosen, a discussion begins in which the pupils sit in a circle and pass the opportunity to speak between themselves. Pupils hold each other accountable for good reasoning, agreeing and disagreeing with each other without being disagreeable. Although enquiries might not conclude with an agreed answer, there will at least be a sense of dialogical progress towards an answer.

## The teacher as facilitator

In order to encourage 4C's thinking and dialogue the teacher will function as a facilitator who neither imposes authoritative views on their pupils nor attempts to validate every pupil's opinion in a relativistic fashion. Their role is to help the children understand and use the tools of philosophical inquiry so that they can construct and reconstruct their own answers to philosophical questions.

The children should see the facilitator as someone who respects them as a person, takes what they have to say seriously, doesn't think s/he knows everything, models self-correction and really loves ideas.

## P4C in Early Years

Through the practice of Sustained Shared Thinking in the Early Years classrooms, young children at GBA are encouraged to start exploring and expressing ideas through dialogue.

By using positive questioning and active listening teachers provide pupils with a simple, effective and enjoyable introduction to the P4C method, and a chance to start thinking a little deeper about basic concepts.

## P4C in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

The prime focuses, sequences and outline of enquiries in KS1 and KS2

### The prime focuses of enquiries:

- *The development of all 4C aspects of P4C practice; creative, critical, caring and collaborative.*
- *To continually improve understanding of Big Ideas and I Wonder Questions.*
- *To aim for a sense of dialogical progress towards an answer in each enquiry.*
- *Regular review and evaluation of pupils both as individuals and as a community.*

## Key Stage 1 (KS1)

### Sequence of enquiry

1. Presentation of stimulus
2. First thoughts
3. Suggesting things that make us wonder
4. First words
5. How well did I/we do?

### KS1 outline of enquiries

In KS1, P4C enquiries are completed as single sessions (in 1 lesson), and delivered as a simplified version of KS2's 10-step model, using the GBA guide; *The Sequence of Enquiry for Younger Children*.

A selection of two or three *I Wonder Questions* for enquiries will be pre-written to choose from (until the class is ready to start attempting to create their own philosophical questions).

Related questions for facilitation (a QuestionPlan) should be prepared as part of lesson planning and referred to during discussions if opportunities arise. These are supporting questions that are based on or linked to the chosen question for enquiry. They are designed to deepen understanding of relevant concepts and questions, and to support the flow and direction of the enquiry.

## Key Stage 2 (KS2)

### 10-step sequence of enquiry

1. Preparation
2. Presentation of stimulus
3. Thinking time
4. Question-making
5. Question-asking
6. Question-choosing
7. First words
8. Middle words
9. Last thoughts
10. Review (and plan)

### KS2 outline of enquiries

In KS2, P4C enquiries are split over two periods:

#### Session one

1. The warm-up.
2. The stimulus - followed by first thoughts to discuss linked Big Ideas (concepts) of interest.
3. Question creation, including discussing, comparing and editing offered questions.
4. Question choosing.

#### Session two

1. The warm-up.
2. A recap of session 1 - How the question was arrived at?
3. The enquiry (the teacher will now have a prepared QuestionPlan for the question).
4. The review.

## Evaluation and Review

### P4C evaluation and review covers:

- Both **content** and **process** of an enquiry.
- The **community**, and the **individual**.
- **Thinking skills:** Creative, critical, logical, relevant, independent, clearly expressed thinking.
- **Attitudes:** Caring, empathetic, co-operative, reasonable, confident, attentive dispositions.

### These four areas might be evaluated by:

- Self-evaluation by participants
- Self-evaluation by facilitator
- Evaluation of participants by facilitator
- Evaluation of facilitator by participants

### Using:

- Written / drawn / 'diary' feedback
- Video – reflections / transcription / analysis
- Discussion in groups / community
- Long and short term evaluation
- Creative tasks

## P4C cross-curricular links planning

Philosophy for Children is planned by GBA's P4C Year Group Leads on a weekly basis. To immerse pupils more fully in their learning, cross-curricular links are planned where possible by selecting Concepts and Stimuli linked to the relevant current topics or themes being covered in English, Science, Social Studies and if possible Maths.

In addition, each week, a particular 4C's skill for development is chosen according to the needs of the class. Learning opportunities to develop these skills are planned for alongside the main lesson plan.

## English

P4C contributes significantly to the development of skills in spoken language by actively promoting speaking and listening skills.

Opportunities are continuously provided to make progress against all the statutory requirements for spoken language outlined in the National Curriculum.

## PSHE through P4C

The 2013 OFSTED report into the quality of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) education found that learning in PSHE required improvement or was inadequate in 40% of schools. It stated that the characteristics of the schools that were judged to have outstanding provision were very much in line with those that are central to P4C practice, such as forming open and harmonious relationships, having confidence to discuss sensitive issues and demonstrating excellent personal and social skills.

The features of effective PSHE education are, to a large extent, encompassed within the classroom practice of philosophical enquiry. Within an enquiry, value is given to children's own experiences, and respect shown to the beliefs and experiences of others. The community thinks together and, through dialogue, explores contentious questions. Stress is placed on open-minded, yet rigorous, enquiry; thus providing children a process for conflict resolution which can be transferred to all situations.

Approaches to PSHE education which are didactic and judgmental (e.g. 'you must not smoke') have been found to be less effective and even counter-productive. (*Herbert, Lohman 2011*) It is more meaningful for children, when exploring challenging or sensitive issues, to use dialogue and reflection.

PSHE topics, such as the role money plays in our lives, personal wellbeing, and social issues such as bullying and voting are frequently visited in P4C. Through enquiry and exploration these become more meaningful. This richer level of engagement can empower children to have healthier attitudes and to make healthier choices.

## SMSC and P4C

Although Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development takes place across all the curriculum areas at GBA, P4C offers many more opportunities to examine some of the bigger questions in life. Here again, the P4C approach enables pupils to truly explore these ideas, rather than simply be part of a lesson that is used as a vehicle for delivering content.

### British values

P4C helps to promote the British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The children learn practically about democracy through P4C as almost every session involves the class voting on which question they would like to discuss. The weekly sessions enable children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence whilst encouraging respect for other people.

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Reviewed:	December 2019
To be reviewed:	Annually by September
Responsibility:	School Development Coordinator