

# SAPERE P4C and the new Curriculum for Wales

## Developing active, informed citizens in a small village school

### Fochriw Primary School: A SAPERE P4C Bronze School

Fochriw Primary School is a small village school in a former coal-mining community in Caerphilly, South Wales. It has around 100 students in four mixed-aged classes: a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, significantly above the Welsh average of 18%. The school adopted a P4C approach in 2016 and received the SAPERE P4C Bronze Award in November 2018, the first school in Caerphilly to do so.

Fochriw teachers use P4C as a structured pedagogical approach for oracy, thinking skills and values development. All students, from Nursery to Year 6, engage in P4C.

## P4C and the Welsh Curriculum at Fochriw

'P4C is an exciting pedagogical approach that enthuses our learners at Fochriw. It helps us engage with the Curriculum for Wales, promoting the four purposes and engagement with nearly all of the 12 pedagogical principles.' Miss Johns, P4C Lead and Year 5/6 teacher



Children taking part in a P4C enquiry © Fochriw Primary School

Fochriw's head teacher Sharon Pascoe and her team are passionate about the benefits P4C can bring to all children, and particularly to those experiencing disadvantage. Mrs Pascoe explains: 'At Fochriw Primary we use approaches that will benefit *our pupils in our context*. We are innovative and we 'walk our own path', focusing on what we strongly believe will bring the best outcomes for our pupils. Staff are encouraged to be research-informed for practice that benefits pupils outcomes – and P4C fits this.'

In choosing P4C, Fochriw was seeking a whole-school pedagogical approach to:

- **stimulating and challenging pupils**, through engagement with ideas both familiar and unfamiliar, and equipping them to develop reasoned arguments
- **teaching respect and tolerance** for the contributions of others
- **fostering opportunities for spiritual, cultural, moral and social development** by using P4C in PSE, in particular
- **developing knowledge and understanding across the curriculum**, including in the humanities, science, and Welsh
- **improving oracy and thinking skills** across the curriculum
- **improving attitudes to learning**

Mrs Pascoe believes that P4C is closely aligned with the four purposes set out in the Curriculum for Wales, which together aim to equip the young people of Wales to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Mrs Pascoe says: 'P4C allows a focus on the overall four purposes of the curriculum, depending on the nature of the philosophical enquiry. It allows for the development of the pedagogical principles identified in 'Successful Futures,' (Donaldson 2015). In particular, it creates authentic contexts for learning.'

She adds: 'P4C encourages collaboration. Through a particular enquiry approach, P4C can support social and emotional development and positive relationships. It can connect learning across Areas of Learning and Experience and not compartmentalise children's knowledge and understanding. As children choose what they want to enquire about, they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.'

'P4C provides regular opportunities to practise literacy across the curriculum. The facilitator can select resources that build on the children's previous knowledge and experience and engage interest. Through the 4Cs (critical, creative, collaborative and caring thinking), P4C promotes problem solving and creative and critical thinking and opportunities for assessment for learning.'

## The Impact of P4C at Fochriw

Mrs Pascoe notes that the school's strategic approach, linking P4C and the school's Values Curriculum and focussing on speaking and listening for real purpose, has led to **improved outcomes in oracy**. Teachers have also identified **improvements in thinking skills** as children access the curriculum through P4C's 4Cs: caring thinking, collaborative thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking.

'We talk about sustainability and being a global citizen in our P4C. I like it.' Year 5 student

Fochriw students are using the skills learnt in P4C to develop their views and grow as **authentic learners and ethical, informed citizens**. P4C is providing opportunities to develop children's understanding of and engagement in local and global issues, and is centring the child's voice. Mrs Pascoe cites the example of a P4C enquiry sparked by a child's concern about an image of a hedgehog caught in a plastic ring can holder. The children were so engaged in the questions which arose that they chose to work on a Pupil Voice project on hedgehogs, 'Help our Hogs!'. The project went on to win an award in the Better Energy School Awards for Excellence in Environmental Education. Similarly, student interest in the devastating Australian bush fires of 2019 progressed to a P4C enquiry, which in turn led to the school council and eco committee organising 'Australia Day' – raising nearly £200 for an Australian zoo.

'The children have shared their enthusiasm for P4C in a presentation to governors. I'm proud of our little philosophical thinkers at Fochriw Primary School!' Chair of Governors, Mrs Harris

Mrs Pascoe concludes: 'When our pupils participate in philosophy they benefit from the experience of developing reasoned arguments. It allows pupils to critically think about questions posed. Pupils of all abilities access this approach with success and enjoyment through the discussions. In addition to this, the open nature of the areas of study provides challenge for pupils with advanced skills who benefit from enriched, extended tasks. P4C helps develop mutual respect and understanding so it supports not only intellectual and cognitive approaches in pupils but also fosters positive personal qualities.'

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## Find out more and book your training today

SAPERE P4C is the UK's national charity supporting Philosophy for Children. We provide high-quality P4C training and support and have over 25 years' experience in bringing P4C into a range of schools and educational settings. We offer whole school inset training as well as courses which are open to all.

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