



A Thinking School

What is a Thinking School?

A Thinking School is one where thinking underpins learning; where thinking skills and strategies are taught explicitly and are then used to develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to become more independent and co-operative learners, taking responsibility for their own learning and recognising the skills needed alongside a knowledge-based curriculum to achieve as highly as possible. We are not yet a Thinking School but we are well on the way to becoming one, having introduced P4C and Thinking Maps already as our first two tools over a period of two years.

How is this achieved?

We teach the skills and tools discretely and then look to promote this in all areas of the curriculum, aiming to equip our children with a common language of thinking and a range of tools and strategies to help them develop into confident, independent, inquisitive thinkers.



Our School Vision

**Learning to Think -
Thinking to Learn**

Who is involved?

It is important that we take a whole-school approach, with the school community – governors, parents, staff and children – being fully committed to the school's aims and how they can be best achieved.



Our Thinking Toolbox

We are developing a range of tools and strategies that we are teaching the children in order to promote thinking. We feel it is important that we use a common language of thinking so that the children will recognise

and feel confident with it, wherever they are in the school.

Our aim is that the children will become confident and independent users of these tools, both here at Oaklands Junior School and when they move on.

“This really recognises the children as individuals in the way that they learn and encourages them to develop their own thinking and learning.”

(Parent of a year 4 child)

Questioning

“Sometimes, it’s not the answer that’s important, it’s the question that makes you think in all different ways.”

(Year 5 child)

We place high importance on the value of developing thinking and learning through questioning—and not just by the adults!

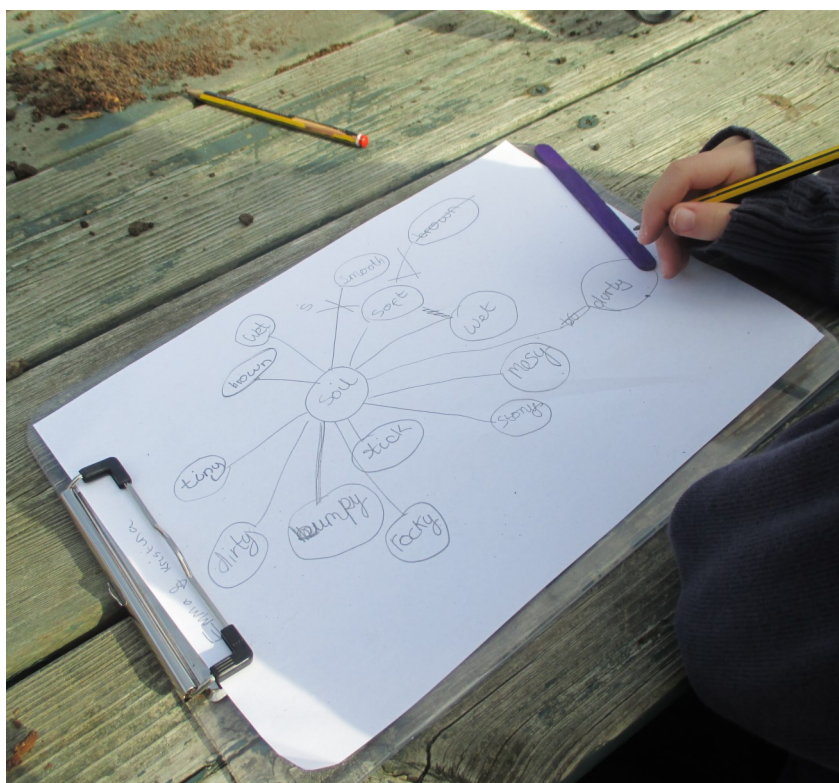
Philosophy for Children (P4C)

The first tool we have introduced is Philosophy for Children (P4C), created by Professor Matthew Lipman. It is designed to develop thinking and reasoning skills and to enhance self esteem.

Through enquiry and exploration of ideas, children learn that their ideas have value and how to recognise the value of the ideas of others. They gain the confidence to ask questions and learn through discussion.

It aims to develop four key types of thinking:

- **Collaborative**—thinking with others
- **Caring**—thinking of others
- **Critical**—making reasoned judgements
- **Creative**—creating new ideas



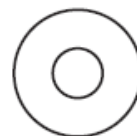
A bubble map to describe the properties of soil

Thinking Maps

Visual tools are a really important way to allow people to organise and present their thoughts in a way that is linked to the neural pathways of the brain.

We have adopted David Hyerle's *Thinking Maps*. A series of maps is used to develop eight fundamental thought processes. The children learn about these different processes and how the maps can be used to represent them. The aim is for them to become independent users of these maps, selecting the correct tool for what they want to do, developing their ideas and using them as planning tools across the curriculum and as a way of recording their thoughts and ideas.

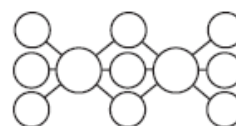
Thinking Maps



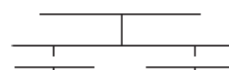
Circle Map:
(Defining in Context)



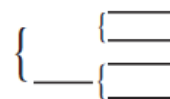
Bubble Map:
(Describing Attributes)



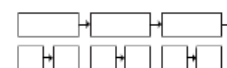
Double Bubble Map:
(Comparing and Contrasting)



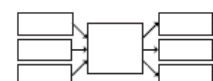
Tree Map:
(Inductive and Deductive Classification)



Brace Map:
(Identify Parts of Whole)



Flow Map:
(Sequencing)



Multi-Flow Map:
(Cause and Effect)



Bridge Map:
(Seeing Analogies)

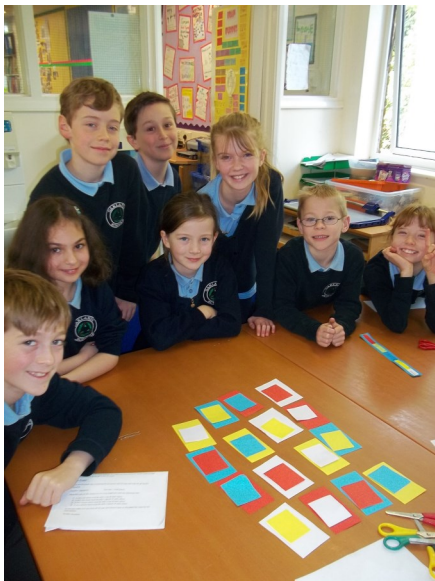
Thinking Together



Thinking Families

At Oaklands, we want to give the children opportunities to put the tools and strategies into practice both within the classroom but also in other environments, working with a greater range of people on tasks that both challenge and inspire their thinking.

Each child becomes a member of a Thinking Family – these are named after colours – and they stay in that family throughout their time with us. Each family includes children from every class. We also have regular Family Feasts, when the children have the chance to eat lunch in their family groups.



LEARNING TO THINK—
THINKING TO LEARN

