



Sunningdale School

Subject Overview: Thinking and Problem Solving

The school is ambitious in its pursuit of the best possible outcomes for its pupils. Sunningdale School is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum that remains wholly appropriate to the needs of each learner. A multi-tiered curriculum model is utilised so that content and pedagogy can be closely matched to the needs of pupils. This approach is arranged across 3 theoretical pedagogical pathways that begin on transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage and run through Key Stages 1 and 2 until the pupils' transition to relevant secondary provisions at the end of year 6. The pathways are the Pre-formal Pathway, the Semi-formal Explore Pathway and the Semi-formal Play Pathway.

The subjects taught within each curriculum pathway are closely matched to the developmental needs of the learners accessing that pathway, enabling them to develop the appropriate baseline level of knowledge, understanding and the skills required to access the next pathway approach or to prepare them for life beyond the school, secondary school and adulthood.

Our Thinking and Problem Solving curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge to build on prior learning and prepare pupils for their next steps. Strong links are made with Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) outcomes and Thinking and Problem Solving builds cumulatively towards supporting these: Employment, Independent Living, Community Participation, Friendships & Relationships.

Through the curriculum area of Thinking and Problem Solving we aim to develop pupils' ability to identify and solve problems as independently as possible. The curriculum area aims to develop pupils' ability to: identify a problem; build their memory bank of how to solve this problem; apply and adapt their thinking and problem solving skills to a range of situations; recognise that there may be

several possible solutions to a problem; and develop their ability to reflect and evaluate.

The key skills and knowledge we want to develop in Thinking and Problem, are:

- Memory building- understanding how to complete a task and developing the ability to do this without support.
- Perception- recognising and identifying problems and recognising opportunities.
- Thinking- breaking down a problem into elements, thinking through the relevant features of a problem and planning ways to solve the problem.
- Action- remembering how to solve a problem and applying this memory to a situation or generalising and adapting it to a range of situations.
- Evaluation- evaluating how a plan worked, recognising when existing plans and strategies needs changing. Thus recognising how to improve ones own learning.

The Thinking and Problem Solving curriculum area aims to give pupils transferrable skills that they can draw upon in everyday situations. It encourages pupils to be as independent as possible (therefore reducing learned helplessness) through the gradual reduction of ladders and scaffolds.

Developing Thinking and Problem Solving supports pupil's development and understanding of British Values.

The school promotes British Values through our spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning that permeates through the school's curriculum and supports the holistic development of the child so that they can 'be more'.

Thinking and Problem Solving supports pupils' ability to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society. It develops pupils' ability to respect the rule of law and adhere to societal standards: remaining calm and independently finding solutions in potentially stressful situations. Thinking and Problem Solving develops pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, promoting individual liberty through encouraging pupils to realise that there may be more than one solution to a problem and that they can find a solution in a way that works for them as an individual.

Our Curriculum Intent: Thinking and Problem Solving

The Thinking and Problem Solving curriculum has been carefully designed and sequenced to provide pupils with a secure, coherent knowledge of how to identify and solve problems that may arise as independently as possible. The curriculum

also develops pupils' ability to cross-contextualise these skills to new situations, thus also developing their ability to tolerate and manage uncertainty. At all stages, the curriculum links to previous content and concepts and identifies later links.

The Thinking and Problem Solving curriculum is carefully planned to ensure concepts are taught in optimal order to support children's understanding. Medium term plans are tailored to the needs of each class, adapting the learning areas and opportunities to the interests, needs and level of learning of the class. They consist of basic mapping of concepts, resources, activities and content link to the termly curriculum connector theme. This is actioned at a pupil level through the use of a highly personalised planning system supported by specific Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). PLPs are used these to set very small stepped targets across a range of areas (including communication, interaction, emotional development and social skills) so that pupils make consistent progress towards their aspirational targets outlined in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and linked to Preparation for Adulthood outcomes.

At the earliest stages, the sequence of learning begins with pupils developing their thinking, understanding and memory skills in the subject area: cognition and challenge. Pupils will begin to develop their ability to actively engage with their environment and understanding that they can affect what happens in their immediate environment.

As Thinking and Problem Solving becomes more developed, pupils develop their ability to act upon their understanding and apply solutions to problems that may arise. Pupils then develop their ability to analyse, evaluate, generalise and create.

Thinking and Problem Solving prepares pupils for future learning and transition to Key Stage 3 by promoting independence through developing pupils' ability to resolve problems that may arise as independently as possible. Thinking and Problem solving also develops pupils' ability to generalise and cross-contextualise their skills to a range of scenarios that may arise. More-so, Thinking and Problem Solving develops pupils' ability to tolerate uncertainty through providing strategies to apply in new situations.