



# Thinking Matters

## **Ofsted and Estyn Report Comments on Thinking Schools**

### **James Hornby School – Accredited in July 2016. Ofsted in May 2016 – Good**

“There is much evidence to indicate that the James Hornsby School is not only receptive to new developments and initiatives but also seeks out opportunities to enhance and enrich the pupils’ love and learning and deepen their thinking.”

### **St James’s Catholic Primary School, Twickenham. Ofsted Report January 2015 – Outstanding**

“The school provides pupils with a rich range of subjects with a strong focus on ‘thinking skills’, encouraging pupils to discuss and think deeply about their learning. It meets the needs of the National Curriculum, and this information is shared with parents at parent meetings and via the school website.”

“Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and set personal targets for improvement. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on an Indian village, pupils developed and consolidated their learning by looking at thinking maps, asking relevant questions and considering what they needed to do next to meet their learning objectives.”

### **Monnow Primary School, Newport. Estyn Report February 2015 – Good**

‘By the of key stage 2, most pupils express their ideas clearly. They know how to express their opinions confidently, for example, when they talk about their skills as learners. They are able to develop and argument well, for example when talking about the positive and negative effects of the Aswan Dam in Egypt.’

‘In the Foundation Phase, many pupils use their thinking skills very well .... In key stage 2 pupils are developing their thinking and problem-solving skills highly effectively. They use a wide range of strategies that enable them to solve problems successfully in a range of different contexts.’

### **Mynydd Cynffig Infants School – Bridgend, Wales. Estyn Report February 2015 – Excellent**

Employing multiple strategies to employ thinking skills – see specific feedback from Estyn on the Mynydd Cynffig’s use of thinking skills [in this report](#).

### **Barbara Priestman Academy – Advanced accreditation July 2016. Ofsted Report Feb 2015 – Good**

“The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of strategies, including questioning, extremely well to help students develop their thinking skills.”

“Teaching assistants are very effective. They use questioning and a range of other strategies to help students think for themselves..... teachers increasingly encourage students to develop thinking and questioning tools to explore their own ideas more effectively.”

### **Cardiff High School, Wales. Estyn Report March 2013 – Excellent**

‘The impact of the extensive provision of thinking skills is clear in the consistently high standards of these skills’ and ‘Teachers across the school are consistent in helping pupils to develop high level thinking skills so that pupils can become confident independent thinkers.’

**Akiva School, London. Ofsted Report Oct 2013 – Good**

‘A significant feature of nearly all lessons is the emphasis on pupils reflecting upon their learning. This was used confidently in many classrooms to encourage pupils to think creatively, often by asking questions that required more than a right or wrong answer.’

**Spinney Avenue CE, Halton. Ofsted Report March 2013 – Good**

‘The excellent progress made by pupils in developing their thinking skills has a marked effect on their personal development and the standards they attain.’

**Beechwood Primary School, Runcorn. Ofsted Report July 2012 – Outstanding**

‘The ‘thinking school’ ethos pervades all aspects of school life and accounts for highly reflective leaders, managers, teachers, and pupils....‘They make rapid progress in their learning because of their exceptional ability to think, to reason and to work independently.’

‘Pupils’ achievement stands out because pupils leave Year 6 with exceptionally well - developed thinking skills, curious minds, and an outstanding ability to work independently. In short, pupils learn how to learn. The innovative curriculum is well planned to enable teachers to develop pupils’ lifelong learning skills systematically. That means that even the youngest pupils are able to think about and offer reasoned responses to open - ended questions.’

‘Pupils live up to the school motto consistently in ‘thinking for themselves and caring for others.’

**Tongwynlais Primary, Cardiff. Estyn Report March 2012 – Excellent**

‘Because they develop their thinking skills very well, many pupils make excellent progress by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6.....The curriculum is highly innovative and at the leading edge of development in the sector. It embodies current academic expertise from three British universities in addition to thinking skills strategies from Australia and America.’

‘Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They promote extensively the use of key skills and thinking skills. As a result, many pupils are independent thinkers and learners.....Staff undertake joint research programmes to improve areas such as thinking skills and guided reading.’

**Charles Kingsley, Hampshire. Ofsted Report March 2011 – Outstanding**

‘The use of secure subject knowledge and questioning is outstanding.....to develop their higher order thinking skills and to help them work out solutions for themselves.’ and ‘Pupils are helped to think like dance choreographers, mathematicians or artists and become independent learners swiftly.’

‘One parent said ,‘We love that our child is being taught how to learn, not just what to learn.’

**Kingsdown and Ringwould Cof E School, Kent. Ofsted Report 2011 – Good.**

‘Members of staff take a key role in working with other schools to share good practice, especially with regard to the development of thinking skills. This innovative project has helped to motivate pupils to write with enthusiasm and to ensure that progress in writing is now good for both boys and girls at Key Stage 1. The school is the first in Kent to be awarded ‘Thinking School’ status and teachers use this approach to learning very effectively in lessons. This has had a particularly positive effect in English, where the structure of ‘mapping out’ ideas has helped pupils to structure their writing much more effectively.’

**Rhydypneu Primary School, Cardiff. Estyn Report October 2011 – Good**

‘Five years ago, becoming a ‘Thinking School’ was still an aspiration for Rhydypenau Primary School, Cardiff. Now, the school has been transformed by placing thinking skills at the heart of learning and using a range

of strategies across lessons to develop independent learners. The impact: children's confidence, autonomy and creativity have been boosted, whilst staff have seen improvements in writing, especially in boys. The school is developing rapidly as a community of confident, enthusiastic, independent learners.'

'The promotion of thinking skills is an integral part of all learning experiences and an outstanding feature of the school's work. This is sector-leading practice, which has a clear and direct impact on the pupils' ability to learn independently.....'in many classes, the quality of teachers' planning of activities to develop pupils' thinking skills is excellent. They provide resources and structured support that are very well designed to enable pupils to read, investigate, research and learn independently.'

#### **Oakwood Park Grammar School, Kent. Ofsted Report 2011 – Outstanding**

'In the best lessons, teachers use their strong subject knowledge as a foundation for clear explanations and instructions. They elicit thoughtful and exploratory comments from students with probing questions that push them to think more deeply and develop their responses further. Regular checks on understanding relate the lesson to assessment criteria so that students can evaluate their progress towards their target levels and grades. Well-structured group and pair work enables students to articulate their thinking.'

#### **Ernehale Infants School, Nottingham. Ofsted Report March 2010 – Outstanding**

'At the heart of this thinking and learning community are the pupils who are given every opportunity to plan and direct their own learning in many different subjects....Pupils are encouraged to be confident, independent and reflective learners. As a consequence their behaviour is outstanding.'

'Thinking skills are at the centre of all learning experiences and, consequently, pupils take a significant role in being responsible for their own learning. Their very positive attitudes and insight into their own styles of learning have created highly motivated, independent and resilient learners.....Being part of a community which encourages enquiry skills has enabled pupils to discuss, debate and question their teachers and each other. Consequently, pupils not only have well-developed speaking and listening skills but are also able to reflect, to make connections in their learning and to think through the consequences of their behaviour and that of others.'

#### **Three Bridges, Ealing**

'The current focus on developing pupils' thinking skills is making learning more interesting and purposeful and is contributing to the rise in standards'

#### **St Mary's Junior School, Sutton**

'An outstanding feature is the focus on 'thinking skills' across the school. This plays a significant role in teaching pupils how to learn effectively. It is an important factor in the good progress they make and in their preparation for secondary school and later life'

#### **Ridgeway School, Swindon**

'The school has embraced Teaching and Learning initiatives such as Learning to Learn, Assessment for Learning and the development of Thinking Skills and Accelerated Learning, in a successful and coordinated way. These have made a good impact in lessons'

#### **Woodnewton Learning Community, Corby**

'Good emphasis on the development of pupils' thinking skills and upon the use of questions to act as someone to understand (philosopher) is having a good effect on every pupils learning.'