



## Philosophy for Children in the Primary-Secondary Transition at Manorfield Primary and Bow School, Tower Hamlets

### Introduction

Manorfield Primary and Bow Secondary School have both undergone huge turnarounds in the last couple of years. Manorfield went from special measures to outstanding in a single year under the leadership of new head teacher, Wendy Hick. Cath Smith, the head teacher at Bow School, has transformed the school from being a single-sex secondary school into a mixed school with a new Sixth Form and a rapidly growing roll. Bow School has also moved into impressive new premises.



### P4C at Manorfield and Bow

Both schools are committed to providing the best educational opportunities for their students, and believe that Philosophy for Children (P4C) supports young people in developing their critical thinking skills. They believe that P4C also helps to develop literacy and the independent learning skills needed for progress at KS4 and 5. They are lead schools in the East London hub, in which 11 schools, 300 teachers and over 5,000 students are engaging in regular philosophical enquiries.



Manorfield is running weekly P4C sessions for all year groups from nursery to Year 6. Bow is running weekly P4C enquiries in Years 7. As well as their investments in training and support, both have appointed P4C leaders whose role is to embed P4C in the schools. Rebecca Blackwood is the P4C leader at Manorfield and Sim Khera-Lye at Bow. Manorfield recently became the first school in the East London hub

project to attain a SAPERE award for excellent P4C practice, achieving the silver award only 15 months after starting P4C. Bow is not far behind.

### The P4C Transition Project

With financial support from M&G Investments, Manorfield and Bow are running a parallel project using P4C to help students cope with the transition from primary to secondary. This transition is recognized to be a key challenge in the educational journey, particularly for those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, of whom there are many in Tower Hamlets.

In summer 2014, Manorfield worked to support Bow School in its introduction of P4C by sharing good practice, conducting peer observations, and leading question and answer sessions. The schools are running joint P4C sessions for Year 6 and Year 7 students. Staff are attending P4C twilight training sessions and the schools are holding a joint celebration event. Six teachers have been selected in each school to deliver the transition project. They have drawn up a joint observation schedule allowing staff from both schools to observe each other facilitating P4C.

Wendy Hick says: "The joint Year 6 and Year 7 enquiries really build confidence for our students. Were it not for the uniforms, it would be hard to tell which students were primary and which secondary"

Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the EEF, said: "We very much welcome ... the Government investing £10 million ... to find out what works in helping disadvantaged children make the difficult transition from primary to secondary school. We know that difficulty making this transition effectively is one of the key stumbling blocks to improving social mobility in this country."

#### **What Next?**

Cath Smith says: "I have been delighted by the success of this project so far, and it is only in its early days. We are planning to extend it to more of our feeder schools who are practicing P4C. We are also looking to expand into Year 8 and incorporate P4C into a number of different subject areas."

As the model develops, we plan to extend it across the East London P4C hub schools and beyond. In time we hope that it will provide a template for P4C in the primary-secondary transition that SAPERE can recommend to P4C schools across the country.

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