

Thinking Schools

Statement from Headteacher

Welcome to St Mary's. We made a decision a few years ago now, that we needed to equip our children with tools for learning and for life. We knew they would be able to draw upon these skills for the rest of their lives. Our thinking school journey has been a voyage of discovery not only for the children but for us as staff too.

It was really important to dispel some myths.

- That you are born clever
- That you can't control your emotions
- That some people are just not very good at learning new things
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We started with learning about the brain. We learned together about the wide range of emotions we can feel when we are challenged and most importantly how we can regulate these big emotions. The children discovered that understanding this process had a huge impact upon their self-esteem and ultimately time in school.

We wanted to ensure that the messages the children were hearing were consistent, and built upon what they already knew. Our drive teams have really 'driven' this forward. They examined all aspects of school life and innovated systems to support the wellbeing and progress of our children. We remain curious and keep asking ourselves and our pupils key questions to develop our practice. We have concentrated on reducing the visual noise on the walls in the classroom to ensure a calm and focussed place to learn.

It quickly became clear, that effective questioning, modelling ambitious vocabulary and supporting strategic thinking through the use of thinking frames would support our children to become increasingly more independent in their learning. Our children now relish the challenge to commit key facts to memory and delight in explaining their ideas, to help a friend understand more fully.

Ultimately, our children have a growing understanding of how messy learning can be, but now have the tools to organise their thinking and present their ideas clearly.

