**Evaluation of the Philosophy for Children (P4C) Programme**

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to evaluate the effectiveness of SAPERE’s Philosophy for Children (P4C) programme.

We would like to invite your school to participate in a randomised controlled trial (RCT) which will explore the extent to which the P4C programme helps to improve children’s reading, maths and social skills. In the case of LA maintained schools, we have notified your authority of our intention to contact you about this research.

**What is Philosophy for Children (P4C)?**

P4C is a pedagogy – a way of teaching and learning that seeks to develop skills in independent thinking, reasoning, good judgment, communication and collaboration. P4C aims to develop intellectual dispositions, such as curiosity and clarity of expression, as well as emotional intelligence.

This takes place within what is called a Community of Enquiry, that is to say, a safe learning environment which values the importance of caring and collaborative thinking.

Headteachers usually introduce P4C for these benefits because they recognise that P4C is about children’s lifelong learning. Please see P4C website for further information: <http://www.sapere.org.uk/>

Over 500 schools in the UK are already delivering and enjoying the benefits of P4C, with 50 schools already signed up to the three-year Going for Gold programme. This trial would give your school the opportunity to join the Going for Gold programme and introduce P4C in your school at the reduced cost of £1,600 per year for three years (a total cost of £4,800 over three years); the total cost normally associated with the three year programme is £10,500.

**What we would like your school to do for this evaluation**

All schools that agree to participate in the evaluation will be randomly assigned to one of two groups in the spring term 2017. Schools allocated to the intervention group will receive P4C training and support over three years, with the intention of reaching SAPERE’s Going for Gold Award.

Between March and September 2017, SAPERE will deliver initial training during INSET days to up to 25 teaching staff on dates of your school’s choice. Schools allocated to the control group will continue ‘business as usual’ and will be required to commit to not participating in P4C until September 2019, and will receive a financial incentive of £5,700 for participating in the research.

Intervention schools must commit to:

* releasing up to 25 teachers for one day’s training during the 2016/17 academic year and for two further INSET days training in 2017/8
* all Key Stage 1 and 2 teachers to be trained in P4C
* introducing weekly P4C sessions of around 45 minutes for Year 4-6 classes from September 2017 onwards
* designating one or more teachers a ‘P4C leader’ and releasing them for Advanced P4C training at various points in the programme
* providing pupil data of year 4 pupils (name, date of birth and unique pupil number)
* administering a social skills questionnaire to year 4 pupils at the beginning of the spring term 2017. The questionnaire will be repeated in 2019.
* contributing towards the annual costs of P4C: £1,600 per year for three years (a total of £4,800)
* writing P4C Going for Gold programme into the school’s strategic plan.

Control group schools must commit to:

* maintaining a ‘business as usual’ approach: teaching children as normal and not using P4C materials until September 2019
* designating one teacher to be NFER’s key contact throughout the duration of the trial
* providing pupil data of year 4 pupils (name, date of birth and unique pupil number)
* administering a social skills questionnaire to Year 4 pupils at the beginning of the spring term 2017. The questionnaire will be repeated in 2019.
* receiving a financial incentive of £5,700 at the end of the 2019 summer term.

Please note that your school will have to keep inset days available until your school is assigned to either the intervention or control group. We would also like all teachers to take part in a short questionnaire in the summer term 2019.

**Measuring pupil outcomes for the evaluation**

An important aspect of the evaluation is to measure the reading and maths performance and social skills of the participating children in both the intervention and control groups at the start of the evaluation and again two years later.

The measures of pupils’ reading and maths performance at the start and end of the evaluation will be pupils’ KS1 results from summer 2016 and KS2 results from summer 2019. We will also ask all pupils involved in the evaluation to complete a short questionnaire relating to social skills in summer 2019. The details are shown in the enclosed information sheet.

**What are the benefits to participating schools?**

Intervention schools will receive the P4C Going for Gold programme at a reduced cost of £1,600 per annum. This represents a discount of more than half on the normal cost of the programme. Where schools are allocated to the control group, they will receive a financial incentive in September 2019, equivalent to the subsidy given to the intervention schools for taking part in the trial. This can either be used to invest in introducing P4C to the school or used in other ways.

All schools will receive the results from the social skills questionnaire taken by pupils and will also be sent the results of the evaluation when the report is published in 2020. For a list of frequently asked questions regarding this project please go to <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/schools/taking-part-in-our-research/eeps/>.

**How to let us know if you want to take part**

 We very much hope that you find this opportunity interesting and can help us with this evaluation. If you have any queries about this research please contact our helpdesk on 01753 637096 or email P4C@NFER.ac.uk.