

Welcome



Welcome to Issue 3 of the Thinking, Teaching and Learning Newsletter for the Autumn Term 2025. We are excited to share how our students have been engaging with new approaches to learning and showcase some of their fantastic work across a range of subjects.

This academic year, we have introduced extended tutor time, giving KS3 students the chance to explore current affairs articles twice a week, while KS4 students focus on revision strategies using Thinking Maps.

Across all lessons, students are also using Thinking Hats to strengthen their critical thinking skills. Alongside this, our teaching staff have been taking part in weekly Deliberate Practice sessions, focusing on systematic checking for understanding, to make classroom learning even more effective. It is wonderful to see these strategies helping students grow in confidence and independence, and we encourage you to talk to your child about these approaches and how they are using them in their learning.

Meet the Metacognition Drive Team

Helping Students Become Confident, Independent Thinkers



Mrs S Dale, Miss C Peter, Mr D Bruce, Mr H Lovering, Mrs L Hammett-Perlmutter,
Mrs S Burnham, Miss C Simmonds, Mr J Harle, Mr S Glover, Mrs J Dickinson,
Mrs E Connell, Ms E Ruiz, Ms M Reilly, Mrs J Cooper, Miss L Clelland, Miss L Trevarthen

Our Metacognition Drive Team works across the school to support students and staff in strengthening our whole-school commitment to deep, reflective thinking. We focus on strategies that help children understand how they learn, not just what they learn. We champion the use of Thinking Hats, Thinking Maps, and structured metacognitive strategies that help learners plan, monitor, and reflect on their thinking. The team works across both sites, supporting teachers and students by modelling these approaches in lessons, providing resources, and delivering staff training. These strategies encourage students to take ownership of their progress, develop problem-solving skills, and grow in confidence. Our ultimate goal is to prepare students for success by giving them the tools to think critically and independently.



Celebrating Student Success in the November PPEs

We are delighted to share the outstanding achievements of our students in the recent November PPE examinations. Many of our learners have demonstrated exceptional academic performance, achieving Grade 7, 8, and 9 across a range of subjects.

These remarkable results reflect the very best of our CARE values, particularly Ambition and Excellence. Our students have shown what can be accomplished through determination, resilience, and a commitment to hard work. Their success is not only a measure of academic ability but also of the dedication and perseverance that underpin their learning journey.

Achieving these top grades requires focus, preparation, and a growth mindset. We are incredibly proud of every student who embraced these challenges and demonstrated what is possible when ambition meets effort.

As a school community, we want to celebrate these achievements and recognise the incredible journey our students have undertaken. Their success sets a powerful example for others and inspires us all to strive for excellence. Congratulations to all our high achievers, you embody the very best of our CARE values, and we look forward to seeing your continued success.

Eric Acatiej, Fiona Akter, Tegan Batchelor, Shelby Blamey, Abijith Binitha Sreekumar, Ivy Bowskill, Silver Brugge, Scarlett Butler, Carys Button, Maisie Crisp, Ruby Daniel-Brown, Kara Duke, Gracie Ferguson-Parker, Holly Grant, Alexandre Guerin, Amelia Holding, Jack Jenner, Amy Joyce, Julia Kasprowicz, Charlie Miljus, Lucas Millington, Kelsey Morling, Scarlett Muscott, Holly Platt, Kody Rain, Olivia Robotham, Harvey Savage, Louis Stewart, Natan Stychno, Nicolas Szarpak, Nikodem Szarpak, Michael Thompson, Jessica Tully, Mihai Vihodtev, Vegas Waller, Luke Wilkins, Alfie Whitfield.



Borough Road

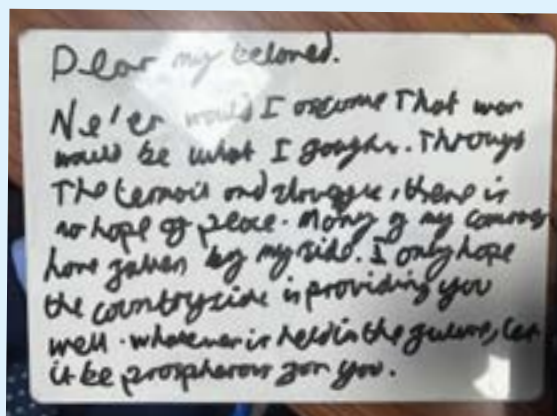
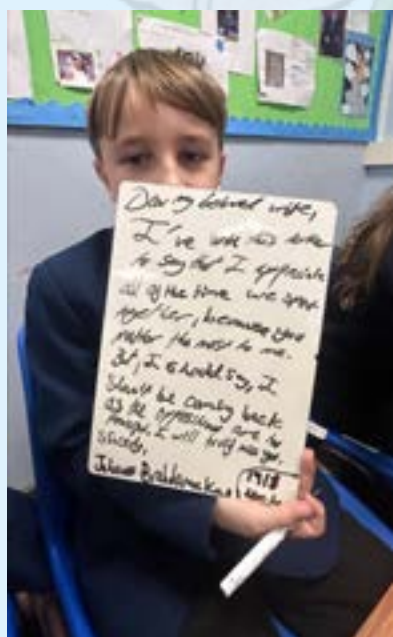
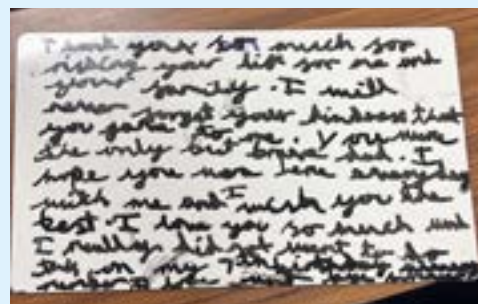
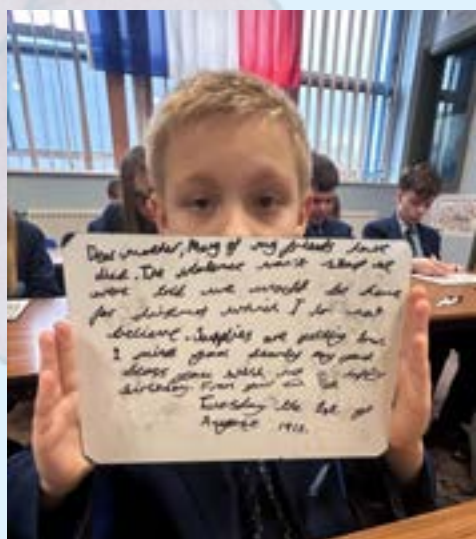
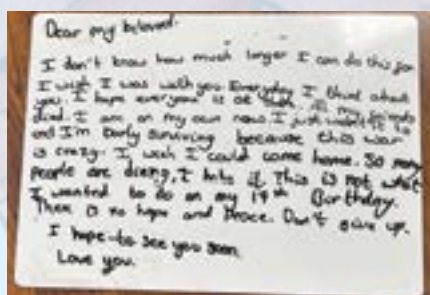


Waterleat Road

Lacey Belsher, Biona Biju, Madi Bishop, Jasmin Boadle, Aliasha Brown, Lucas Carus, Nevaeh Corkhill, Archie Cound, Lucy Cutcliffe, Cassy Delco, Rebecca Devine, Cody Easterbrook, Charlene-Rose Garrett, Charlie Harbidge, Ruby Harrison, Paige Hodge, Charlie Irish, Chad Lyons, Seb Mika, Diego Monk, Evie Moorey, Taylor Oldfield, Casey Perry, Paige Redman, Summer Skelly, Lacey Stanbury, Aminta Sharland, Emily Thomas, Harry Tipton, Summer Tomlinson, Samara Uddin, Hollie Waltham, Callum White, Cole Woodcock, Evie York.

The Day Reading

On Remembrance Day 2025, 7BP1 had a respectful discussion around Remembrance Day and the importance of honouring those who have fought for our safety and freedom. By using The Day, a learning resource used during tutor time, the tutor group learned about the origin of the poppy and what it represents. Using whiteboards, they then wrote emotional letters from the perspective of people impacted by the war. There was a range of focuses, with some choosing to write as a soldier to family or friends, wondering if they would come home, whilst others wrote to soldiers as the family who had been left behind. All students were incredibly respectful during this tutor session and wrote heart-wrenching letters, which show their respect and understanding of the sacrifice of those in past and present wars.



Year 11 Revision Leaderboard: Celebrating Effort and Rewards

Year 11 revision has continued into Term 2 and staff can now record attendance online using Arbor. This has helped us to create the revision leaderboard below, which shows the results up until the end of Term 1.

We want as many of our year 11s to achieve these rewards as possible.

YEAR 11 REVISION ATTENDANCE REWARDS	
ATTENDANCE MILESTONES	
10	5 GOLDEN TICKETS
20	£5 OFF PROM TICKET END OF TERM PIZZA EVENT INVITE 5 GOLDEN TICKETS
30	£5 OFF PROM TICKET £10 GIFT VOUCHER END OF TERM PIZZA EVENT INVITE 5 GOLDEN TICKETS
40	£10 OFF PROM TICKET £15 GIFT VOUCHER END OF TERM PIZZA EVENT INVITE 5 GOLDEN TICKETS
50	FREE PROM TICKET £20 GIFT VOUCHER END OF TERM PIZZA EVENT INVITE 5 GOLDEN TICKETS

BRC TOP REVISION ATTENDEES!

Eric Petrus Acatiel (12)
Khaled Althaljeh (11)
Ameilia Holding (11)
Julia Karpowicz (11)
Holly Platt (11)
Alexandre Guerin (10)

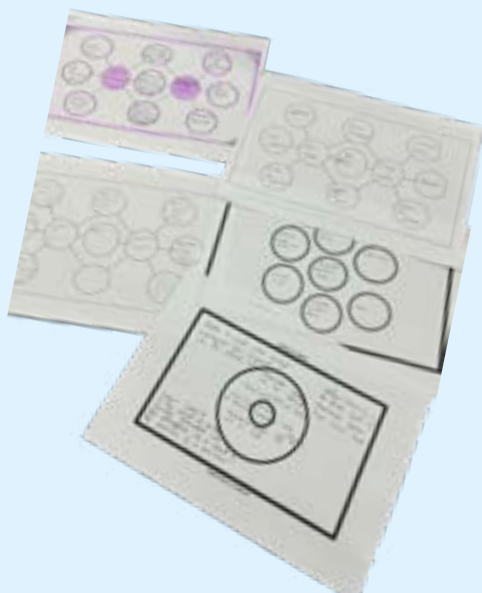
WRC TOP REVISION ATTENDEES!

Samara Uddin (9)
Evie York (8)
Millie Lewis (8)
Aleshia Brown (8)
Katy Buckingham (7)
Ruby Harrison (7)
Paige Redman (7)

Smart Thinking, Strong Learning: Year 10 & 11 Tutor Time Focus

Year 10 tutor time sessions have involved revising key topics for all EBacc and option subjects using thinking maps.

Year 11 tutor time sessions have focused on PPE preparation and now reviewing performance and identifying areas of misconception.



YEAR 11 – REVISION TIMETABLE WRC					
WEEK A	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AFTER SCHOOL	MEETINGS	GEOGRAPHY (COMPARATIVE STUDIES)	SCIENCE VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS (COURSEWORK)	TRINITY MATHS ENGLISH VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS (COURSEWORK)	
VOCATIONAL /COURSEWORK OPTIONS THIS TERM: DRAMA, SPORT, ART, FOOD, PE, ETHICS					
WEEK B	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AFTER SCHOOL	MEETINGS	MATHS	ENGLISH	SCIENCE	

YEAR 11 – REVISION TIMETABLE BRC					
WEEK A	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AFTER SCHOOL	MEETINGS	HISTORY (BRC) GEOGRAPHY SCIENCE (BRC)	MATHS (BRC) ENGLISH (BRC) VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS (COURSEWORK) (BRC)	TRINITY (BRC) GEOGRAPHY (BRC) VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS (COURSEWORK) (BRC)	
VOCATIONAL /COURSEWORK OPTIONS THIS TERM: DRAMA, SPORT, ART, FOOD, PE, ETHICS					
WEEK B	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AFTER SCHOOL	MEETINGS	MATHS (BRC)	ENGLISH (BRC)	SCIENCE (BRC)	



Year 9 Art & Design: Soap Carving Inspired by Peter Randall-Page

As part of the Structures project, Year 9 students took part in a focused lesson exploring form and meaning through soap carving, inspired by sculptor Peter Randall-Page. His nature-based sculptures encourage open interpretation—he deliberately avoids fixed meanings, believing that art should prompt personal reflection rather than deliver a single message.

Students embraced this idea by carving abstract forms from soap, experimenting with texture, structure, and form. The process encouraged metacognitive thinking, as students reflected not only on what they were making, but why—considering how their choices shaped the meaning of their work and how that meaning might shift depending on the viewer.

This creative task reinforced the core knowledge that art's meaning is never fixed but evolves through individual perspectives and experiences. It was a valuable opportunity for students to connect practical making with deeper thinking about interpretation and intention.





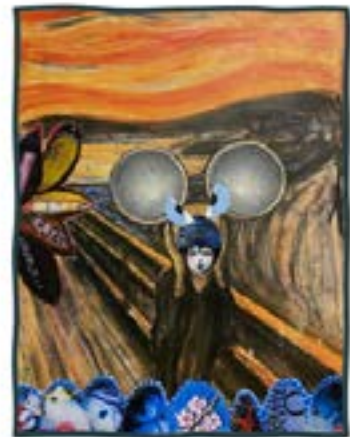
Year 8 Art & Design: Why do artists break the rules?

As part of the Sweet and Sour project, Year 8 students tackled a big question: Are there any rules in art? They discovered that while art has guidelines, helping develop skills, techniques, and knowledge, how these are applied depends on individual creativity.

Students debated thought-provoking questions:

- Do we still expect artists to show traditional skills?
- What is the role of skill in the age of ICT and AI?
- Is art about the work or the message?

They then adapted famous artworks through collage, text, or rearrangement, challenging ideas of originality and meaning. This practical task linked directly with metacognitive strategies as students reflected not only on what they were creating, but why. They considered how choices shaped interpretation and how meaning shifts for different viewers. By combining making with critical thinking, students developed deeper understanding of creativity, intention, and the evolving role of skill in a digital age.



Drama

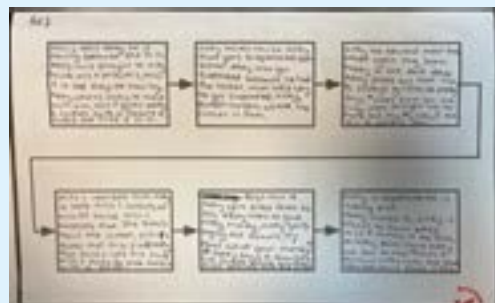


Bringing Blood Brothers to Life: Year 10 Drama in Action

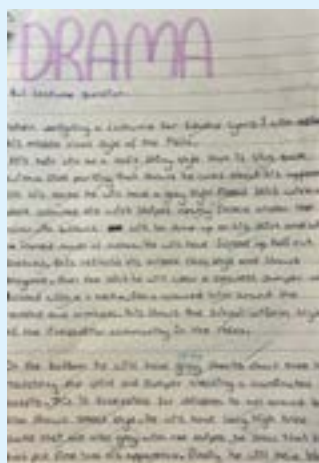
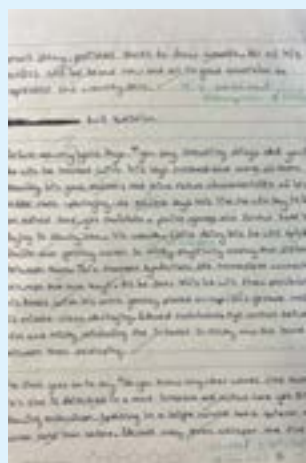
Exploring characters, themes, and design while mastering performance skills for their GCSE journey.

Our Year 10 Drama students have made an excellent start to the Autumn Term as they work towards their Component 1 set text, *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell. This powerful play spans from the late 1950s to the 1980s and follows the lives of twin boys separated at birth, a story that raises thought-provoking themes such as nature versus nurture and superstition.

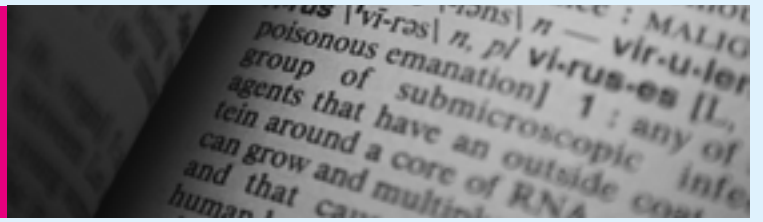
Homework and classwork this term have been outstanding, and some exceptional work has already been produced. The class has shown real commitment and creativity, laying a strong foundation for their GCSE course. We are excited to see how their understanding and performance skills continue to grow as the year progresses.



Students have been diving deep into character study and thematic analysis while developing key theatrical skills, including vocal delivery, physicality, and stage presence. They have also explored the creative side of theatre by designing sets and costumes, learning to write from the perspective of a designer as well as an actor. One of the biggest challenges has been portraying characters across different ages, from childhood to adulthood, while maintaining authenticity.



English

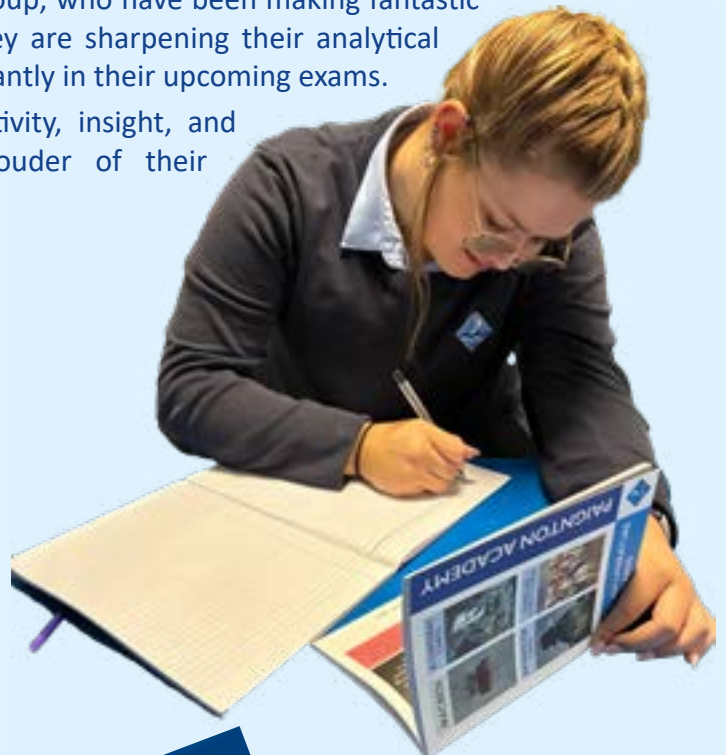


English Department Highlights

Our Year 11 students have been dazzling us with their weekly essays, showing a thoughtful grasp of the complex and unlikeable character of Mr Birling in *An Inspector Calls*. At the same time, Year 9 have been delighting us with fabulously eerie gothic stories, full of atmosphere and imagination.

We are also proud of our Year 10 English Intervention group, who have been making fantastic progress. Using our brand-new literature flashcards, they are sharpening their analytical skills and building confidence that will support them brilliantly in their upcoming exams.

Across all year groups, it's inspiring to see such creativity, insight, and enthusiasm shining through — we couldn't be prouder of their achievements.



Ethics

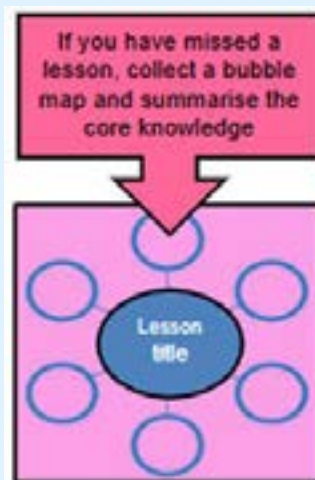


Thinking About Thinking: How the Ethics Department Is Building Brilliant Minds

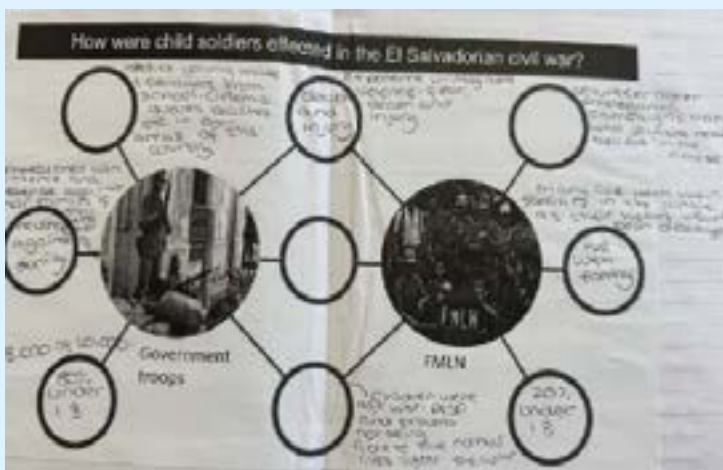


If you've wandered past an Ethics lesson lately, you might have noticed something colourful (and perhaps a little bubbly) happening on the whiteboards! That's because our department has been diving deep into metacognition – helping students think about their thinking – and it's transforming the way they learn. Questioning student knowledge, as well as how they got there, is a huge part of our Ethics lessons; helping students to make meaningful connections and memorable mental models.

Bubble Maps & Catch-Up Confidence



Missed a lesson? No problem! Our students use bubble maps to refocus on the core knowledge from previous topics. It's a fun and visual way for them to spot what they know, what they've forgotten, and where the gaps are. These maps have become our secret weapon for rebuilding confidence after absences or even helping students to prepare for assessment.



Double the Thinking, Double the Fun

For lessons that compare beliefs or ideas (most of our lessons), we've been introducing double bubble maps. Students love these side-by-side comparisons; whether it's exploring Christian and Hindu creation stories or weighing up different ethical viewpoints. It's metacognition in action, recognising similarities and differences helps them deepen understanding and make meaningful connections.



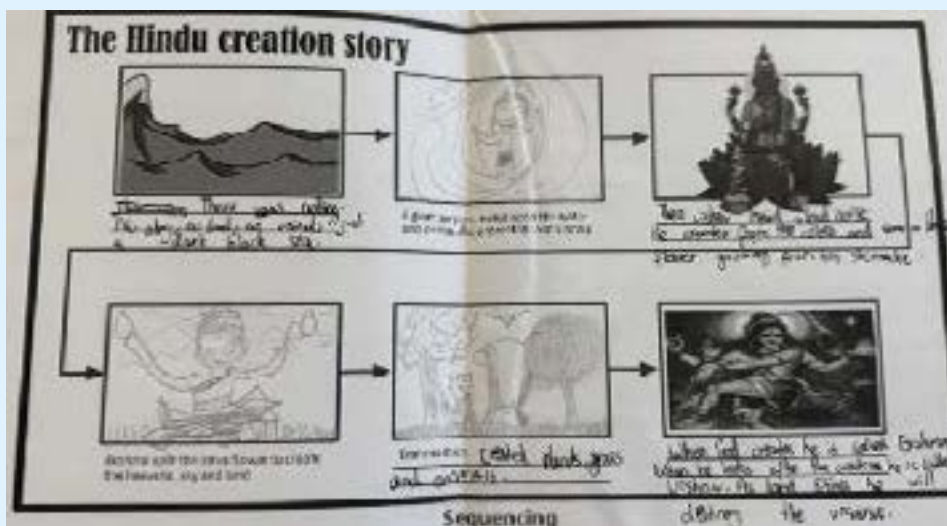
Thinking About Thinking: How the Ethics Department Is Building Brilliant Minds

Thinking Hats: No Actual Hats Required (Sadly).. yet

To encourage deeper thinking and reflection, we've been implementing thinking hats into our lessons. Each 'hat' represents a different perspective; from creative to critical, optimistic to cautious, and helps students approach questions from multiple angles. It is a brilliant way to spark discussion and reflection, particularly where there is no specific answer, just plenty of food for thought.



Flow Maps for a Flowing Understanding



Our Year 7s have been using flow maps to explore different beliefs about how the universe began. These visual timelines help them sequence ideas and see how various creation stories unfold. It's structured, simple, and surprisingly satisfying; and a great way to connect big concepts to clear thinking.

Metacognition Beyond the Maps

Of course, metacognition does not just happen on paper; It is imbedded into our verbal teaching and classroom conversations too. We make a conscious effort to model reflective thinking aloud; showing students that it is okay to pause, rethink, and even make mistakes. In fact, we celebrate those moments! They are often where the best learning happens. By normalising uncertainty, we are helping students build resilience, self-awareness, and confidence in their own thought processes.

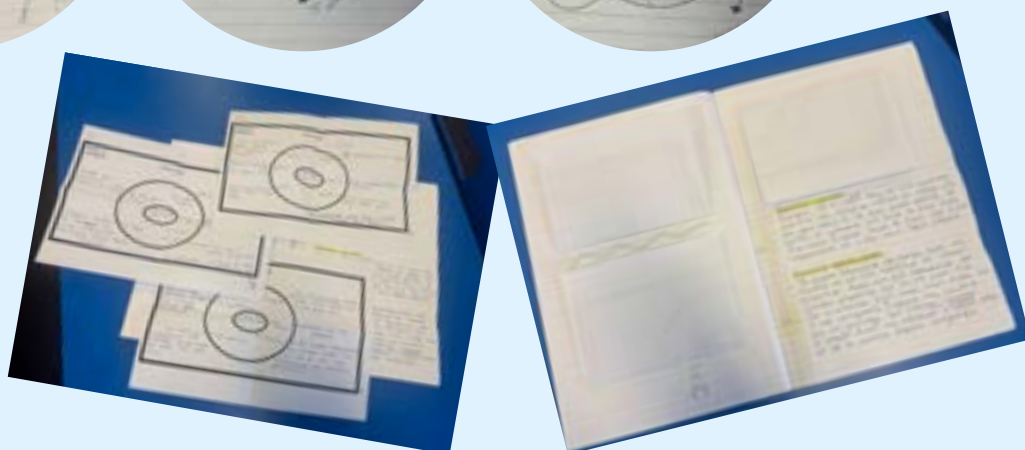
So next time you pass by our classrooms, listen out for those thoughtful "aha!" moments. Behind every discussion, bubble map, and flow map is a team of students learning not just what to think, but how to think... and that is something worth celebrating!



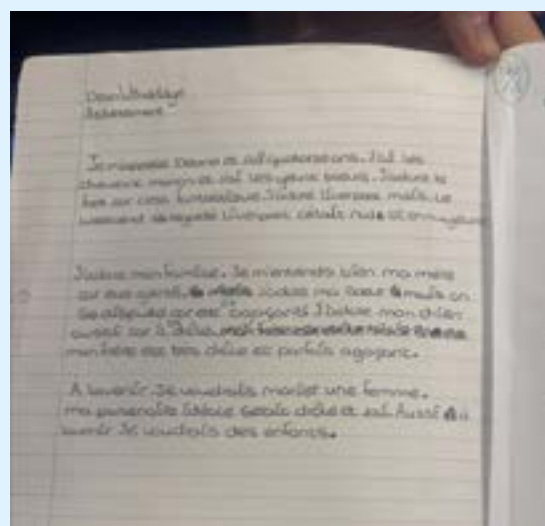
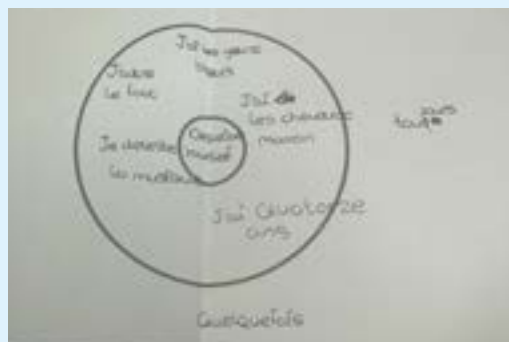
Breaking Down Barriers: Circle Maps Empower SEN and Non-SEN Learners

This term, our students have been using circle maps to break down big ideas into manageable chunks, and the results are impressive.

Student A used 3 circle maps which has the purpose of creating a long-written answer which resulted in a 100% graded assessment. Each circle map was used with the purpose of breaking down the long-written answer into small manageable chunks. This allows for a clear focus on sentence structure.



Student B one of our SEN learners started with a simple circle map to organise their thoughts. This strategy helped them produce a well-structured assessment.



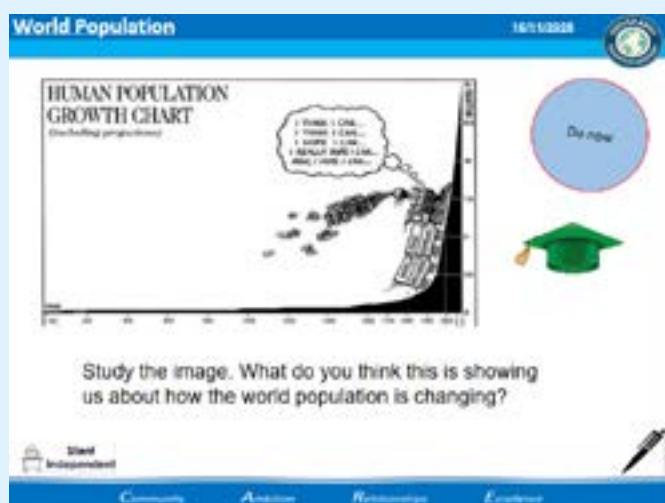
Circle maps are proving to be a powerful tool for all learners, helping them turn ideas into confident, high-quality writing.

Geography

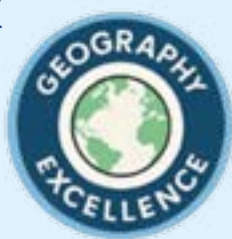


Creative and Reflective Thinking Shines in Geography

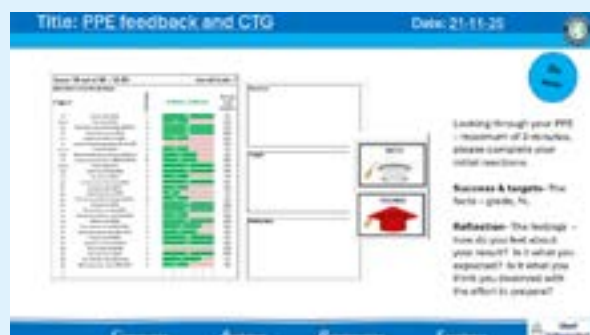
This term our KS3 & KS4 geographers have been using a range of appropriate thinking hats and maps to support their work. The Geography department have been working hard to ensure their lesson slides are updated with maps and hats to aid students critical thinking skills across a range of topics.



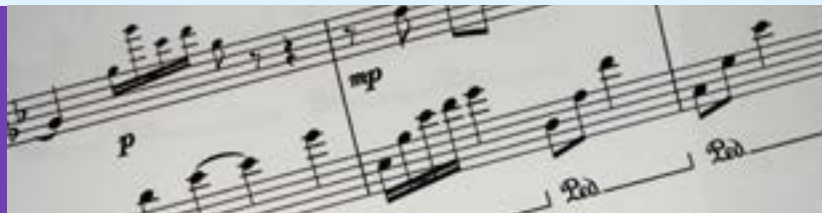
Our year 8 geographers have been using the green hat to think creatively about cartoons showing powerful messages associated with world population, whilst using the yellow and black hats to consider WWW & EBIs after their assessment for freshwater environments.



Our KS4 year 11 geographers have been using the white and red thinking hats to evaluate their PPEs performance. This reflective process has allowed them to identify in detail their next steps and target areas for improvement ahead of their final GCSE examinations.



Music



African Drumming Samba

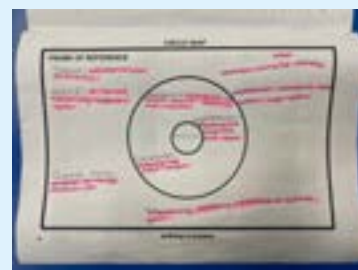
Across Terms 1 and 2, the music curriculum has explored music from different cultures to enrich our students' understanding of music across the world. During Term 1, Year 9 students learned about samba, including its cultural roots, range of instruments and its significance in carnivals. Their core knowledge was recorded on a circle map, to allow them to understand the key features and reference points of samba. Students performed in whole class ensembles and groups on a variety of samba instruments including surdos, ganzas and agogo bells. Students developed their playing technique, rhythm skills and ability to work in an ensemble, with many students taking a leading role in both whole class and small ensembles. This was a very popular topic in Year 9!

Year 7

In Year 7, students are already developing the skills they will need for these future topics, by exploring rhythm and pulse. This includes learning about a range of different note values and how to play them, including rests. Students are recording their core knowledge on a flow map, so they can understand how their learning is developing each week. The note values and rests are then used in a variety of rhythms for students to play, individually, in a whole class ensemble and in groups. As the lessons progress, the challenge of polyrhythms and syncopation come up to develop their ability to focus on challenging rhythms in ensembles. Students will use the skills they are using now in every music lesson going forwards.

Year 8

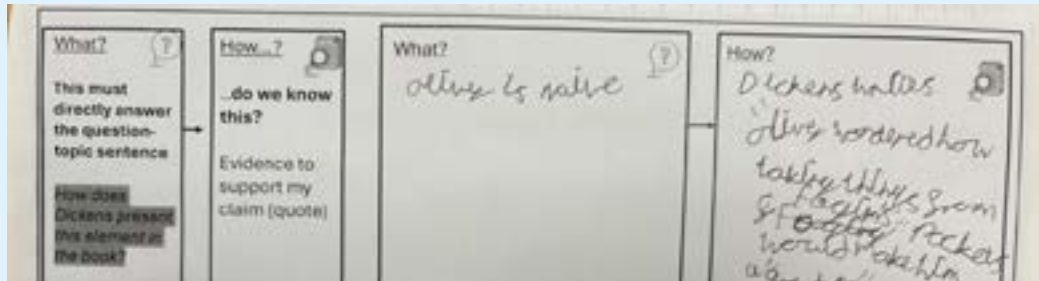
In Year 8, students are currently learning about African music, and the influence this has had on many more styles across the world. Each lesson, students are playing a variety of polyrhythms on the djembe whilst hearing a wide range of African music styles. Their core knowledge is being written down on a circle map, to highlight the key learning for each lesson and any reference points. Students are learning as a whole class ensemble, to then split off into independent groups to rehearse and perform their djembe drumming arrangements. This is a topic that brings a sense of community to the music classroom, and it has been great to see all the students engaged in this topic!



Nurture

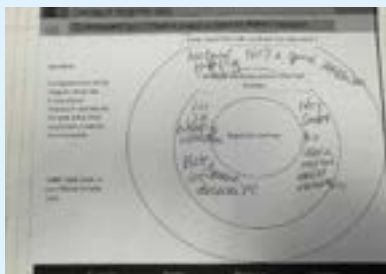


From Ideas to Understanding



This term has seen a real focus on ensuring that our learners in Nurture can organise thoughts and arguments in a more logical way. This is intended to support their ability to follow logical steps to solve problems and write for an extended period and have a clear and structured way of keeping information that will be useful for their final assessment tasks.

We have seen a fantastic development in the use of thinking maps to organise ideas and the way in which pupils are now developing these to allow for extension of their own thinking around the topic.



We have extensively been using just three maps- circle, bubble and flow maps with both years 7 and 8. This has supported pupils' efforts to speak for a more extended period and allowed pupils to make much better, concise points around topic questions. This will hopefully lead to better writing outcomes as we approach our assessment points.



Mathematically we have increased our use of concrete objects- especially with year 7, to reduce the cognitive load that pupils feel when faced with calculations. The use of counters, bead-strings and place value charts, make learning more accessible for our learners in nurture and often allows the more abstract ideas to become visible. In the current topic of study, we have made rapid progress through the small steps and information has been retained more readily through this approach.



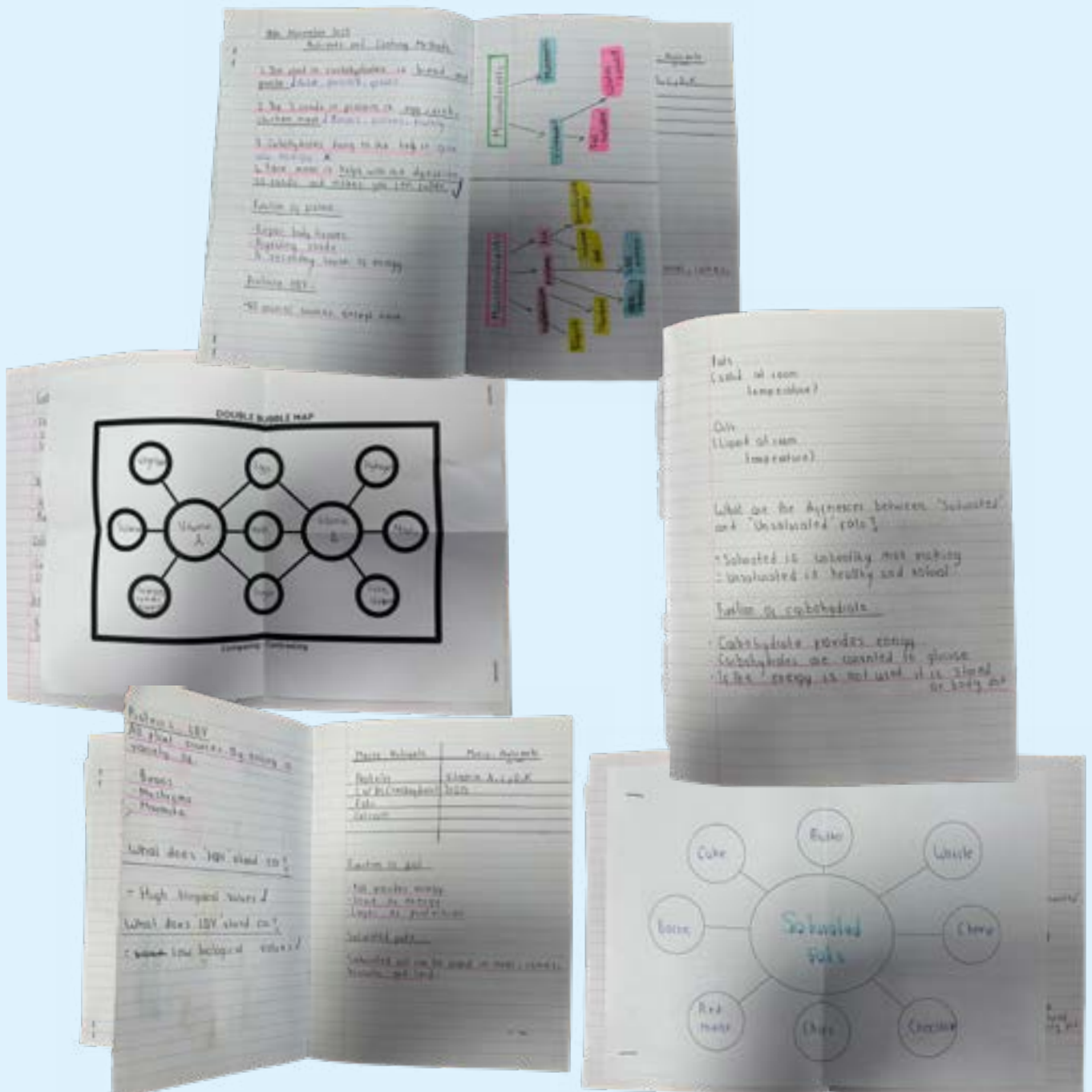
Technology



Thinking Through Food: How Students Combine Creativity and Critical Thinking

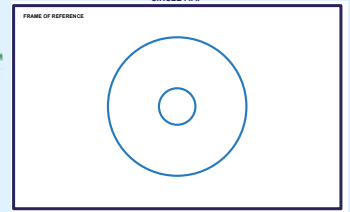
Our KS3 students have been making fantastic progress through the curriculum. They are creating a variety of dishes while developing not only complex culinary techniques but also essential life skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom.

Meanwhile, Year 10 students are diving deeper into the science of nutrition. They are learning about the different nutrients our bodies need and how these contribute to health and wellbeing. To strengthen their understanding, they are using thinking maps to embed knowledge and make connections across topics



HOW CAN PARENTS / CARERS SUPPORT THEIR CHILD WITH THINKING TOOLS?

Parents play a vital role in helping children develop and apply Thinking Tools effectively. Here are some practical ways you can support this learning at home:



1. Familiarise Yourself with the Tools

Take time to understand the Thinking Tools your child is using at school (e.g. Thinking Hats, Thinking Maps).

2. Encourage Reflective Thinking

Ask open-ended questions that prompt your child to explain their thinking. For example:

- “Why do you think that?”
- “What other options could there be?”
- “How did you come to that conclusion?”



3. Use Thinking Tools in Everyday Situations

Involve your child in decision-making at home using Thinking Tools.

4. Celebrate the Process, Not Just the Outcome

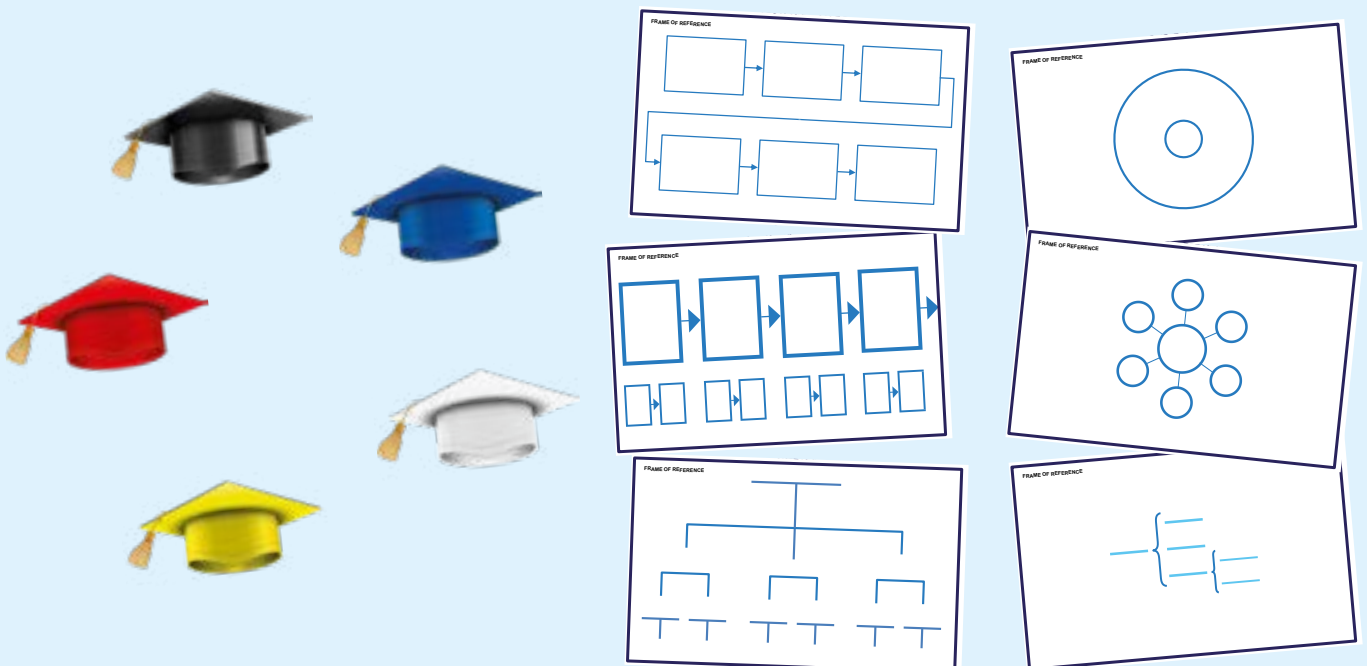
Praise your child for how they approached a problem, not just whether they got the “right” answer. This builds confidence and encourages a growth mindset.

5. Create a Thinking-Friendly Environment

Provide time and space for your child to think, reflect, and explore ideas. Encourage curiosity and allow them to make mistakes and learn from them.

6. At home you can:

- You can use the Thinking Hats to help your child think clearly and from different angles.
- Use the hats when making decisions (like choosing a holiday or solving a problem).
- Let your child lead the thinking and switch hats as needed.



Thinking, Teaching & Learning at Paignton Academy



***Scan to access Thinking Tools
Videos on the website***

Thinking Hats



Thinking Maps



***Our next newsletter, Issue 4, celebrating
Thinking, Teaching & Learning
will be published in Term 4.***