

Perspective Probing Programme

Fordham Primary School has produced hundreds of happy achieving Pupils where high expectations of both parents and children have led to consecutive **outstanding** Ofsted Reports. Perspective probing has been a *key tool in the school's success by improving relationships.*

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Perspective Probing Endorsement

Overall aim: to provide a simple, straight-forward programme that opens up dialogue between schools, pupils and parents. It provides a common sense 'reality check' on life styles and attitudes.

It does not aim to provide in-depth psycho analysis or prescription remedies, but through probing questions encourages honest self-examination and reflection. Although Perspective Probing does not aim to apportion blame it doesn't shy away from raising sensitive questions that need to be answered. When used wisely, it encourages children/adults to face reality, supporting the building of positive relationships and helps to clarify future action/s.

In short, it supports individuals/families who want to *Ditch Excuses and Face the Truth*.



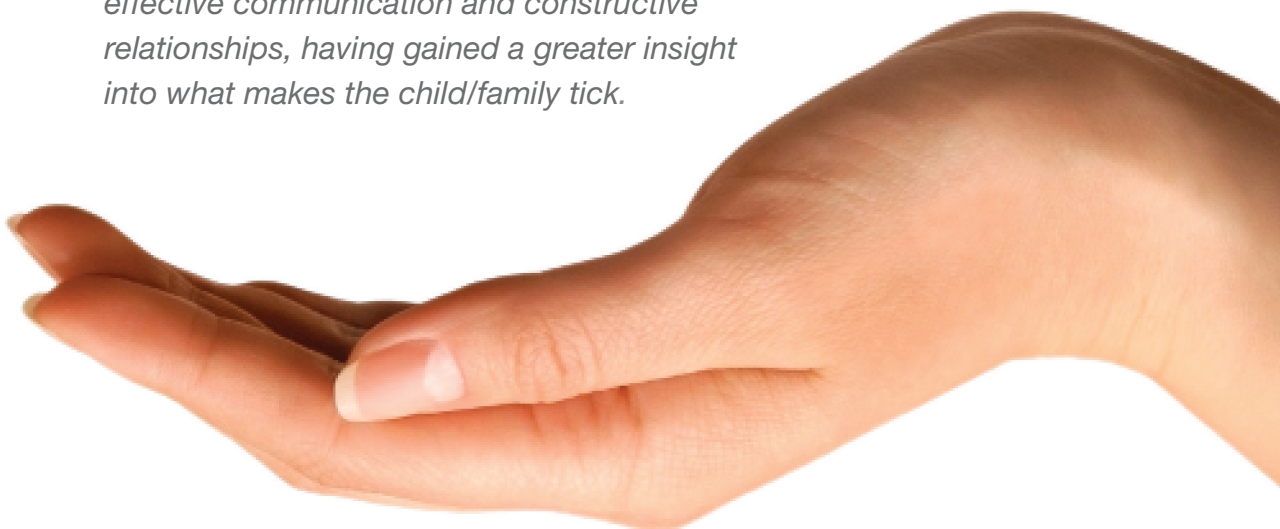
Using the Programme

- The Perspective Probing Programme has been designed to aid the teacher (or other relevant adult) in opening meaningful dialogue with children and their families.
- These are the key questions that the most effective practitioners I have worked with would like answered. The programme has successfully been used within the school's environment, enhancing relationships between children, families, teachers and the social services network. The right questions, asked at the right time, in the right way, can have a profound positive impact on children and their families.
- As you can see, several of the questions are delicate and perhaps 'politically incorrect'. Some questions may appear to be simplistic whilst others may appear too mature and/or beyond the recipient's experience/understanding.
- If a practitioner is unsure or uneasy about the content, direction or general thrust of a particular question, then it would be better not to ask it in the first place. Common sense and sensitivity are essential qualities for getting the best out of this programme, as its primary function is to act as a catalyst for purposeful engagement and not to provide definitive direction/answers.
- It is not always necessary to ask the questions as laid out in this programme, they can be modified/adapted through rephrasing in order to be more relevant to the recipient's age, experience, outlook and context.
- More often than not, valuable insights will come from how the child responds/reacts to specific questions, rather than what he/she actually says.
- It is essential that parental permission is gained before using the programme. It is assumed that discussions regarding the child have already taken place with the parent/carer. A parental permission form is included in this pack.

There is an old North American Indian warning about not judging another person until you have spent a day, week or year in their moccasins. It is so easy to jump to swift, superficial conclusions about others when a little reflecting, empathising and gentle probing can provide a far more accurate insight into the person's world and the reasons behind their behaviour and attitude.

Perspective Probing is a simple, concise, commonsense programme that presents pertinent questions to both children and adult family members, in order for them to face up to/come to terms with their own reality/perceptions and expectations.

It is only when the latter has been achieved can a school truly engage with pupils and their families. In a nutshell, Perspective Probing is about laying foundations for effective communication and constructive relationships, having gained a greater insight into what makes the child/family tick.



- **My Lifestyle**
Simple questions giving a valuable insight into the child's current lifestyle.
- **Pupil Profile: Getting to Know You Better**
Broader questions that give an insight into the child's hopes, dreams and aspirations beyond school and family.
- **Probing Emotional/Social Perceptions and Behaviour**
- **Probing for Optimism**
- **Probing for Self Image/Assertiveness**
- **Probing for Worry/Guilt**
- **Attitude/Approach Towards School Life: Questions and Analysis**
This gives a valuable first-hand insight and profile summary into the child's views/attitudes towards school.
- **20 Small Steps Towards Positive Living and Enhancing Relationships**
20 small, constructive, easy to achieve tasks, helping children to redirect their focus on positive outcomes. A child does not usually live in isolation but as part of a family unit. It could be argued that the quality of relationships within this unit can either have a positive or negative effect on the child
- **25 ways to Enhance/Transform Adult Relationships**
This aims at nudging partners/couples in the right direction in order to create a more positive and caring environment.
- **Parent Attitude Questionnaire and Analysis**
Encourages parents to reflect on their current attitude/practice/strategies and face up to improvements that may need to be made.

Rationale Behind Questions

My Lifestyle

The child's lifestyle has a major effect on a child's education. If a child comes to school tired, hungry, full of food additives and/or worried about issues at home, the last thing on their mind is education and learning.

Similarly, watching too much television, spending all hours stuck to a computer screen, not getting enough exercise and fresh air, can also be detrimental. Unfortunately, with the stress and time pressures on modern families, children can drift almost unnoticed into a lifestyle that can have an adverse effect on their educational performance.

These questions assist in taking stock and getting a general idea about possible health and welfare issues regarding the child's lifestyle.

Getting to Know You Better

Adults often assume that they know children better than they actually do. We've all seen or heard of the television programme where married couples/partners are asked questions about each other in private and then the answers are revealed to both of them.

How often do we see partners of 10, 20 or 30+ years still demonstrate a lack of knowledge about each other? If this is the case for long-term intimate relationships, what need there must be for improving our knowledge about the children in our care.

These questions help us to tap into the child's hopes, dreams and aspirations and in doing so enable us to engage with them at a far deeper level than would normally be the case.

Emotional and Social Perceptions

Behaviour and Optimism

Image and Assertiveness

Worry and Guilt

Intellect is crucial to success but we can all too often emphasise the latter at the expense of our emotional make-up. We tend to forget we are made up of flesh and blood and our emotional state, can and does, inhibit or enhance our intellectual capabilities. In short, intellectual pathways in our brains can be blocked by a negative emotional state.

These questions are designed to probe the non-intellectual/non rational aspects of a child's make-up in order to gain a greater insight into how they feel about and perceive their world. Some of the questions may appear too complex/mature for a child, it is therefore down to the skill of the questioner (please see 'Using the Programme' guidance) to ensure questions are modified or omitted as appropriate.

It is possible and sometimes desirable to concentrate on just one of the relevant questions in this section for a short time. Probing and expanding a single line of enquiry can be very enriching and lead to some enlightening dialogue.

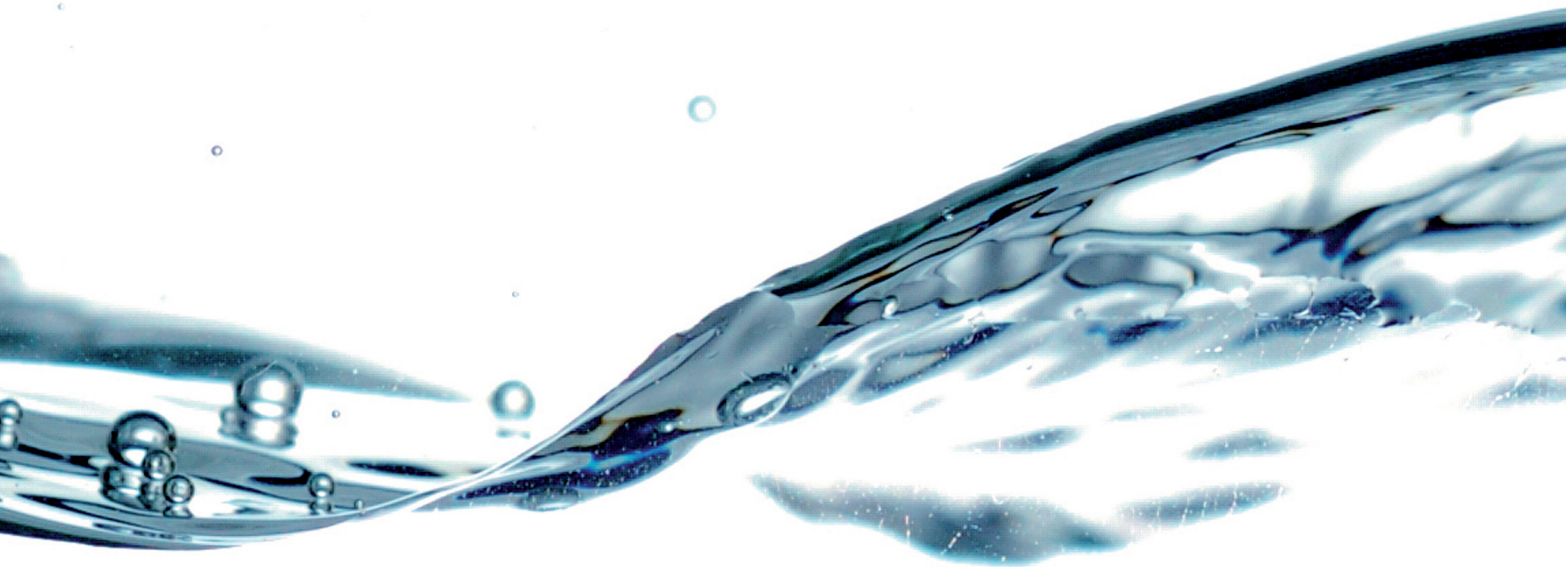
Sometimes it is very reassuring for the child to hear about the adult's fears, doubts and limitations. The realisation that others also think and feel as they do, even those who appear confident and lead successful lives, can be a powerful impetus for the child to move forward.

Attitude/Approach Towards School Life

The 20 questions enable the child to be categorised as a tasker, socialiser, doer or reflector.

In short, does the child prefer to focus on tasks, socialise with peers, jump in and do things without much thought or simply reflect? There is a brief commentary on each category and appropriate questions to imply ways forward.

In reality, a child may be a little of every category. However, whatever the outcome, the questions encourage valuable dialogue regarding the child's attitude towards school.



20 Small Steps to Positive Living and Enhancing Relationships

This has been designed to encourage children in taking responsibility for their own achievements.

These small tasks should not be difficult to achieve and the child will feel a real sense of worth as they tick the completion boxes. The tasks can be completed in any order.

The above can be used to re-integrate a de-motivated child into school life, or simply as fun things for well motivated children.

25 Ways to Enhance/Transform Adult Relationships

Children are affected by the quality of the relationships between the significant adults in their life, normally mum/dad and/or partners.

It is not only the outward negative behaviour that causes them distress, but they are also quick to pick up on subliminal messages regarding tensions in relationships. In short, partners who care about their children should care about each other – it really is as simple as that!

25 ways to Enhance/Transform Adult Relationships, suggests behaviour, attitudes, habits that will do just that. They can be implemented in any order. It may be that partners write their own after a while.

The bottom line is, a child will always feel happier and secure in an environment where the adults display a more caring and positive relationship towards each other.

Parent Attitude

Parents are the primary educators for their children and the single most important influence on their life-changes. There is a correlation between parents' interest and engagement with their child's education and the child's education success.

These questions encourage parents to reflect on their own attitude/practice/strategies and face up to improvements that need to be made.

After completing the questions the parent/s will have some indication about their effectiveness and the extent in which they support the child's schooling. Partners are also encouraged to explore how they are similar and different in their approaches, as well as reflecting on whether they are consistent with all their children.

Another suggestion includes letting the children evaluate their parents.

Perspective Probing Programme

Following discussion withYour child

..... has been nominated to take part in
the above programme.

Your child will be asked to respond to a variety of sensitive questions
regarding their perception of both family life and school.

Please sign the form below to confirm your consent.

.....

I give permission for my child to take
part in the Perspective Probing Programme.

..... signed

..... printed Date

Parent/carer

Summary Sheet and Comments

My Lifestyle

Pupil Profile: Getting to Know You

Probing Emotional/Social Perceptions and Behaviour

Probing for Optimism

Probing for Self Image/Assertiveness

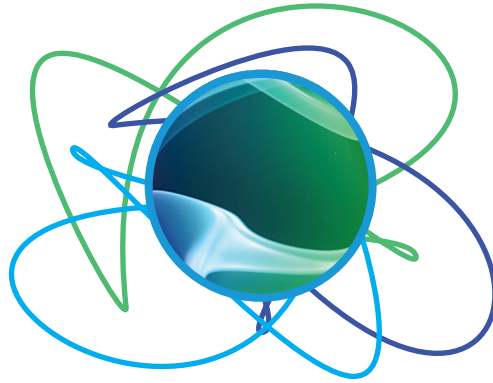
Probing for Worry/Guilt

Attitudes/Approach Towards School Life

20 Small Steps to Positive Living and Enhancing Relationships

25 ways to Enhance/Transform Adult Relationships

Parent Attitude Questionnaire and Analysis



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