

On the ball Philosophical pupils face big questions

by HELEN CHAPMAN

YOUNGSTERS at a primary school in Hampstead are tackling the world's big questions: What makes a wise person? What does it mean to do the right thing? And should Britain leave the EU?

Pupils from age five at New End Primary School in Streatley Place have been learning philosophy, and teachers say it helps the youngsters "choose the better choice".

Deputy headteacher Alan Girling said: "They are learning an enquiry method and learning not just philosophy skills, but proper speaking and listening. We want to show how to have an argument but not a quarrel. It's about words and reasoning but it is not just having a chat. It's serious."

"It helps them recognise concepts, with lessons beginning and ending on their contributions. We as teachers do not tell them



Year 5 pupils, Ethan Galloway, Zani Zymberi, Drin Nimanaj and Sem Oulad Saad, learning philosophy skills in class at New End Primary School

what the answer is. This helps them recognise what is a good idea and to spot the fallacy in each other's logic."

The pupils use a different stimulus to start their lessons, such as an object or a news item, as a springboard

for their discussion.

Mr Girling added: "Brexit is a perfect example of people disagreeing over making a decision. It's a perfect example of opening a discussion of who is right and who is wrong."

Pupil Emma Bousso, 10, said: "I believe it is good to be right but it is better to be happy."

Philosophy lessons at New End School are supported by Philosophy for Children (P4C).