

Mindfulness – A whole school approach, Rhyl Primary

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Published November 3, 2017

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Key Points

- The impact of Mindfulness sessions on classes across KS 1 and 2, a lunchtime Mindfulness colouring club, and an offer to all staff.
- By having regular lessons and daily class input from teachers, we wanted to develop the wellbeing and resilience of pupils, as well as providing a course for staff interested in taking up the offer.

Purpose

What were your reasons for doing this development work?

Alison David, part time Family Support worker at Rhyl Primary school, is also a trained mindfulness teacher. Since 2014 she has facilitated Mindfulness sessions for selected classes and some parents at Rhyl Primary School. Due to the positive feedback from children, staff and parents, the school wanted to extend the offer of mindfulness sessions to more pupils, staff and parents / carers.

Who were the identified target learners?

- One Yr 5 class, two Year 3 classes, one Year 1 class, 2 Reception classes and one Nursery class
- KS2 – Lunchtime Colouring Club
- Offer to all staff

What were your success criteria?

What did you do? (What success criteria did you use?)

All Mindfulness sessions were facilitated by trained Mindfulness teacher, Alison David who has trained with Mindfulness in Schools (MiSP) and Mindful Schools. Alison used the Mindful Schools Curriculum for Mindfulness lessons with children.

Mindfulness sessions for children

Mindfulness sessions ran weekly and took place over one term for each class. Nursery – Year 1 lessons were 15 – 20 minutes and KS2 lessons were 30 minutes.

Each week followed a different aspect of Mindfulness which included concentration practices, emotional self-soothing, calming techniques, kindness and gratitude

practices and awareness. All lessons centered on Mindfulness practices that can help children learn tools that can lead to feeling happier, calmer and more positive.

Children took turns from week 3 to lead a practice for the whole class. Teachers and Teaching Assistants participated in the lessons with the children and embedded the learning by continuing a daily Mindfulness practice with their class.

Mindful Colouring Club

A weekly lunchtime Colouring Club session ran for all KS2 children. 30 children attended weekly – 15 targeted children who could attend every week and 15 children whose classes rotated.

The sessions were self-directed – children arrived, chose their colouring pens etc. and a picture to colour from large selection and sat quietly focusing on their colouring. The Club was very popular and oversubscribed each week. Targeted children were SEND, vulnerable and anxious children or those that were struggling with lunchtime and/or friendships. The Club provided a regular, safe, quiet space.

Mindfulness Classes for Staff

6 week Mindfulness Course: one hour sessions after school. 11 signed up and 2 were unable to continue due to other commitments. 9 members of staff attended including 3 from Haverstock Secondary School.

The course focused on developing a Mindfulness practice and looked at how to reduce and manage stress and anxiety and enhance wellbeing. Participants were expected to do home practice in between sessions and were encouraged to continue with this after the course ended.

Follow on Mindfulness Drop In for Staff

A follow on Drop In was offered to participants of the Mindfulness Course. 6 staff signed up and 3 dropped out due to other commitments. 4 members of staff attended from January 2017 until present. The Drop In ran once week for 1 hour after school and provided a space for staff to continue to practice Mindfulness with the support of a group and was an opportunity to share and ask questions as they arose. Attendance and commitment from the 4 attendees was consistently high.

Sharing learning with other schools

In March 2017, we invited schools and other professionals in Camden to a 'Mindfulness Afternoon' to learn about the positive effects of introducing Mindfulness at Rhyl Primary School and potentially arrange some work directly with Alison. Attendees learnt what Mindfulness is and how it has been implemented at Rhyl, observed Alison teaching mindfulness to a Reception and Yr 5 class, experienced Mindfulness for themselves and had time to ask questions and do some mindful colouring.

See 'Mindfulness Afternoon' PowerPoint attached below.

What specific teaching resources did you use?

- Mindfulness in Schools – <http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org>
- Mindful Schools – <http://www.mindfulschools.org>
- Twinkle – <http://www.twinkle.co.uk>

Outcomes and Impact

What has been the impact on pupil learning and teaching?

- 75% said they enjoyed Mindfulness lessons
- 85% said they liked practicing daily with their class
- 30% said Mindfulness had helped them feel happier at school
- 20% said Mindfulness had helped them feel happier at home
- 55% said Mindfulness helped them calm down when they were upset or angry
- 45% said Mindfulness helped them get to sleep
- 25% said they had taught Mindfulness to another family member

Feedback from staff after Mindfulness Course:

Feedback from all participants was 100% positive: all reported improvement in reducing stress and anxiety. All found it helpful learning and using Mindfulness techniques for every day stresses and challenges. All found it useful to have time to listen and share with colleagues about work/life balance and challenges.

- “I found the course really useful. It was good to work with other members of staff who have similar constraints in their lives and also similar stresses and daily concerns. I would relish the chance to carry on doing another course of this nature.”
- “The course has certainly helped me think about things a little differently and I am finding myself able to enjoy being more in the moment and appreciate smaller things in my life”
- “I always feel more proactive after I’ve done a Mindfulness practice!”
- “I am worrying less and feel less stressed about things I used to get really anxious about”

Evidence of impact on pupil learning and teaching/leadership

- **Classes:** Teachers, support staff and children completed questionnaires at the end of the programme. Teachers were also asked to notice changes and asked for feedback during the course.
- **Colouring Club:** Children signed in and out so we could monitor who was attending, how regularly etc. Targeted children were monitored via feedback from teachers and 1:1 staff
- **Staff:** Staff completed a detailed questionnaire at the end of the course and were asked if they would like a follow on drop in. 7 staff members said yes.