

# Mindfulness – A whole school approach, Rhyl Primary

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To discuss this case study, please contact us via email [customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk)



## 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.
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## 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 specific curriculum area did you intend to have impact on?

Emotional health and wellbeing.

### How were you intending to improve pupil learning?

### What were your success criteria?

## Methodology

## **What did you do - what teaching approaches 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>
- Twinkl – <http://www.twinkl.co.uk>

### **What CPD experiences, materials, research and expertise have you drawn on?**

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.

## **Outcomes and Impact**

### **What has been the impact on pupil learning?**

- 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**

- **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.

### **What has been the impact on teaching?**

#### **Evidence of impact on teaching**

### **What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?**

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### **What is the crucial thing that made the difference?**

The benefits from Mindfulness do not happen quickly and are cumulative. Although all teachers reported noticing the benefit of lessons and daily practice, the effects are longer term e.g. a Yr 5 or 6 class that have been regularly practicing and using Mindfulness for two or more years will show more positive outcomes than a class who have only just received Mindfulness lessons. Therefore, it is important to have a long-term view and be willing to take time to invest and embed Mindfulness in a school.

### **What would your next steps be?**

Teachers who have undertaken the 8-week mindfulness course now run a daily Mindfulness practice (1-10 minutes) with their classes. The training that teachers receive enable them to then run Mindfulness in their classes, and as Mindfulness begins to be part of the school curriculum as a whole classes will continue to practice with their new teacher the following year.

All classes that have received Mindfulness lessons will continue to practice daily and use Mindfulness as they move on up through the school. Teachers who have not experienced Mindfulness with a class will be encouraged to continue daily practice with their classes (this has already happened over the last year).

Alison will continue to teach Mindfulness in the time she has available in her role.

The lunchtime Colouring Club for children will continue to be run by Alison.

The weekly afterschool and lunchtime Mindfulness drop in sessions for all staff will continue to run.

Alison will also offer follow up sessions particularly for children around particular issues e.g. before exams.

Having quiet/silent moments/time may be introduced naturally at particular times if children and staff find this valuable.

## **Sharing Practice**

### **If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where should they start?**

It is really important to have someone who has not only trained to teach Mindfulness but also

has their own established regular Mindfulness practice. This could be someone within school or an outside person.

### **What would be the essential elements to include?**

The long-term aim should be to have a whole school approach. If staff are on board this makes all the difference. It is worth considering investing in a taster session for staff before Mindfulness classes for children (minimum) or a 6-8 week Mindfulness course (60-90 minutes sessions).

It is essential for staff to understand that Mindfulness is not about 'getting children to be quiet' and should not be used as a discipline tool.