

Mindfulness

When? 3 years since implementation in our school as part of our school improvement focus on well-being.

Why? As teachers and parents we often tell children that they just need to concentrate and focus, we assume that they know how to, but they don't. We do learn how to as we get older but so much time has already passed by then. By starting to teach mindfulness and using meditation techniques early on in a child's life we really accelerate the processes of learning to focus, to access a state of calm regardless of emotions, to be kind to them themselves as well as others and how to easily fall asleep at night time to be full of energy for school the next day.



How? Qualified Mindfulness teacher Karen Tromans (also a TA in School) Qualified 2010 British School of Meditation (externally accredited and has an official recognition) My main focus on mindfulness in school is to guide and encourage calmness, kindness, confidence and creativity in the children. I teach the children breathing techniques to quickly and easily calm themselves and I share stories (guided meditations) with them that really help them to focus their minds through using their imagination, release their worries and believe in themselves.

Each year group have a 20 minute session every week. We practice breathing techniques for relaxation and we use visualisation through guided meditations for children to explore emotions. I teach them how to find the sense of quiet and stillness that is always within them regardless of what is happening around them. We talk about feelings and how anger, sadness and frustration are all part of our experience but they come and go and it okay to feel these as well as the positive emotions such as happiness, love and joy. We explore how our thoughts make us behave and how our behaviour affects the way we feel. The children learn to identify when are starting to feel angry or sad and how they can manage those feelings quickly and easily.

So What? We measure the impact from all classes with different areas of focus- here is one example:

Statistics on the impact from Year 6 2016; 27 pupils completed a questionnaire at the beginning of mindfulness and the same questionnaire was taken after 4 weeks.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO CALM YOURSELF DOWN QUICKLY AND EASILY?

Before: 11 said yes After 4 weeks: 23 said yes
16 said no 4 said no

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON ONE THING?

Before: 3 said yes After 4 weeks: 18 said yes
22 said no 9 said no.

Comments the children have made both on questionnaire and to mindfulness teacher personally:

Relaxing, fun and thoughtful - Archie

I think this is a really good way to relax - Oliver

It helps me to focus more on my work plus it makes me feel less nervous - Melissa

I love it and I want to do it every day - Jasmine

I really enjoy it because it makes me feel calmer and happier - Amber

I go to my room and breathe and think of the stories when my brothers are arguing, it makes me feel safe and calm - Phoebe

When I can't sleep I do the breathing you taught me and then it is morning - Holly

I think it really relaxes me and I enjoy it.....a lot! Dan

I really enjoy it because I get to use my imagination inside my head and it makes me feel happy - Evelyn

It really relaxes me after break, it soothes me and gets me ready to learn -Oscar

I feel I have peace after I've had a bad break time - Thomas

I am grateful for this, it is very helpful with feelings and sleep - Poppy

It cools my mind down - Max

As part of our pupil leadership programme, children have come forward and suggested a mindfulness club/sessions at lunchtime as this is what they would like to lead with the mindfulness teacher and have since planned this club to start after half term.

MISP (Massage in Schools Programme)

When? 3 years since implementation in our school as part of our school improvement focus on well-being.

Why? Impact seen previously in my other schools over 15 years.

How? Samantha Saville (Headteacher) Trained instructor with MISA, 2010 and 2017.



Following the official training guidelines from MISA, I have trained every teacher and class in MISP across the school. We sometimes do it in whole school worship time too.

Children follow clear guidelines and carry out the positive touch moves to calming music.

Parents are in agreement and understand the system. Peer to peer. In school- staff sessions- adult to adult not adult to child. Safeguarding- clothed, appropriate touch is openly shared to ensure the sessions are always safe, especially if continued at home with families as they often are. We invite parents/ carers in to experience MISP from their own children so they too are fully aware. Children ask to touch and respect the decision of others. The room is calm and peaceful. The session can be done in 10 minutes.

So What? Impact can be seen in many ways:

1. Permission to touch has helped in playtimes with children not naturally pouncing on one another or getting in their personal space, much better mutual respect can be seen.
2. Relationships- positive touch has been seen to develop positive relationships in class, children working with different partners and gender mix. Respecting one another and taking care of one another through the session. They feedback to one another after the session.
3. MISP is used successfully in lessons as a kinaesthetic plenary to share thoughts through touch- story mapping, letter/ number formation, phonics, story planning, water cycle etc... this ensures all are actively involved in the plenary.
4. Well- being- calming time to calm thoughts and relax children and this is the greatest impact, from the look on the children's faces and their feedback which is consistently 100% positive. If any children do not feel well enough to take part (personal choice) they may just relax in the calm environment or mime the moves on a cushion.
5. Staff sessions – positive team building and relationships. Staff regularly feedback how calm they feel in a class session whilst MISP is taking place and how much they enjoy
6. Regularly after a session of being relaxed, comes an energy and renewed focus ready for further learning.

Details MISA (Massage in Schools Association) : <http://misa.org.uk/>

Trainer: Anne Crease with Touchline Training