

Lancasterian Primary School

Mindfulness Policy



Version No.	Date	Approved by	Review Frequency	Review Date
1	Jan 2021	Governors	+3 Years	Jan 2024

Policy Statement

We believe that mindfulness has great value for children and it should be included as a vital part of the Early Years and Primary curriculum. Mindfulness education from an early age is the key to helping children succeed in their relationships, eventual careers, and lives. Through regular practice and mindfulness activities, children can improve their self-esteem, ability to self-regulate and manage their emotions. There is plenty of academic research available to suggest that mindfulness can play a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. For example, a study named *'The Evidence for Mindfulness in Schools for Children and Young People'* found that short, focused, classroom based MBIs (mindfulness based interventions) in school settings "[Can] reliably impact on a wide range of indicators of positive psychological, social and physical wellbeing and flourishing in children and young people."

-Katherine Weare Emeritus Professor, University of Southampton, Honorary Visiting Professor, University of Exeter

At Lancasterian Primary School we believe that regular, consistent and embedded Mindfulness practice can support the psycho-social health and wellbeing/ mental health, and aspects of cognition needed for children to develop healthy minds and attitudes to work, to themselves and to each other. Our work in this area so far has proved to be popular with students and teachers and show very little evidence of any adverse effects. Therefore, it is important that we continue to develop a Mindfulness Culture and promote a Mindfulness Curriculum that can help all children to reach their full potential.

Aims and Objectives

At Lancasterian Primary School we believe that every child must be provided with opportunities to develop socially, emotionally, academically and physically to achieve the highest possible standards. We are an inclusive learning community that is forward thinking, innovative and confident and committed to ensuring that all of the children in our care are happy, enthusiastic and purposeful learners.

What do we want to achieve as a result of this policy?

- To improve well-being and mental health

As well as helping children to recognise worry, manage difficulties and cope with tests, developing a more mindful awareness also helps children and young people to appreciate what is going well and to flourish.

- To improve social and emotional learning

Mindfulness is often taught in the context of PSHE but can also be taught as a separate subject. It helps to develop a greater awareness of relationships and how to manage them (including difficult ones at home), as well as offering a richer understanding of things like self-esteem and optimism.

- To improve concentration and cognition

Mindfulness trains us to understand and direct our attention with greater awareness and skill. This may improve the capacity of children to concentrate and be less distracted, as well as their working memory and ability to plan.

- To improve behaviour

Mindfulness may help the young to self-regulate more effectively, manage impulsivity and reduce conflict and oppositional behaviour. It should not, however, be used as a disciplinary tool.

Implementation

The Mindfulness aspect of the curriculum will be delivered through a combination of 'Mindful Moments' practiced throughout the school day and specifically taught Mindfulness lessons designed by the Mindfulness In Schools Project organisation. These lessons consist of six x 1 hour long or 12 x half hour long sessions that have been created in response to rigorous research in clinical psychology and neuroscience, written by teachers for teachers, and used successfully in a wide range of educational contexts.

In 2013, the Mindfulness In Schools Project released a 'Paws.b' curricula to provide materials for use with 7-11 year olds, in response to the increasing interest from teachers who wanted a curriculum designed specifically for primary schools. The lessons explore the neuroscience behind mindfulness meditation and the impact it can have on young people in relation to their social, emotional and academic development.

The lessons are fully accessible for a range of learning styles and needs, making them fully inclusive. The themes of the lessons can be categorised by the following titles:

- Making Choices
- Everyday Mindfulness
- Our Amazing Brain
- Finding a Steady Place
- Choosing your way
- Stepping Back
- The Storytelling Mind
- Growing Happiness
- Puppy Training
- Noticing the Wobble
- Working with Difficulty
- The Yum Factor – Noticing the Good Stuff

All of these lessons have specific learning objectives that can be linked to social and emotional well-being within the current curriculum.

In addition, there is also a special course for Year 5 and Year 6 - .breathe - which is to be taught during transition periods and will prepare children for moving on in their educational life, dealing with test pressure and coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and change.

Staff are provided with all training, resources, lesson plans and materials required to deliver the .breathe and Paws.b curriculum effectively.

Measuring The Impact.

The Mindfulness In Schools Project have designed a survey for teachers and pupils to use with the aim of measuring the impact of teaching the mindfulness curriculum in a quantifiable way. The paragraphs below detail how the survey works

“Questionnaire links will remain open for one month following the last lesson of the course and all responses must be in by this deadline to be included. Your Class Impact Presentation PDF sent shortly after will provide you with a summary of how enjoyable and useful the pupils found the course, as well as how likely they are to use specific practices in the future. You will see the percentage of the class that felt **.b / Paws b** supported them with exams, performance, relationships, concentration, difficulties, sleep and much more. MiSP will also send you a full list of pupil comments so that you hear directly from the voices that really matter.

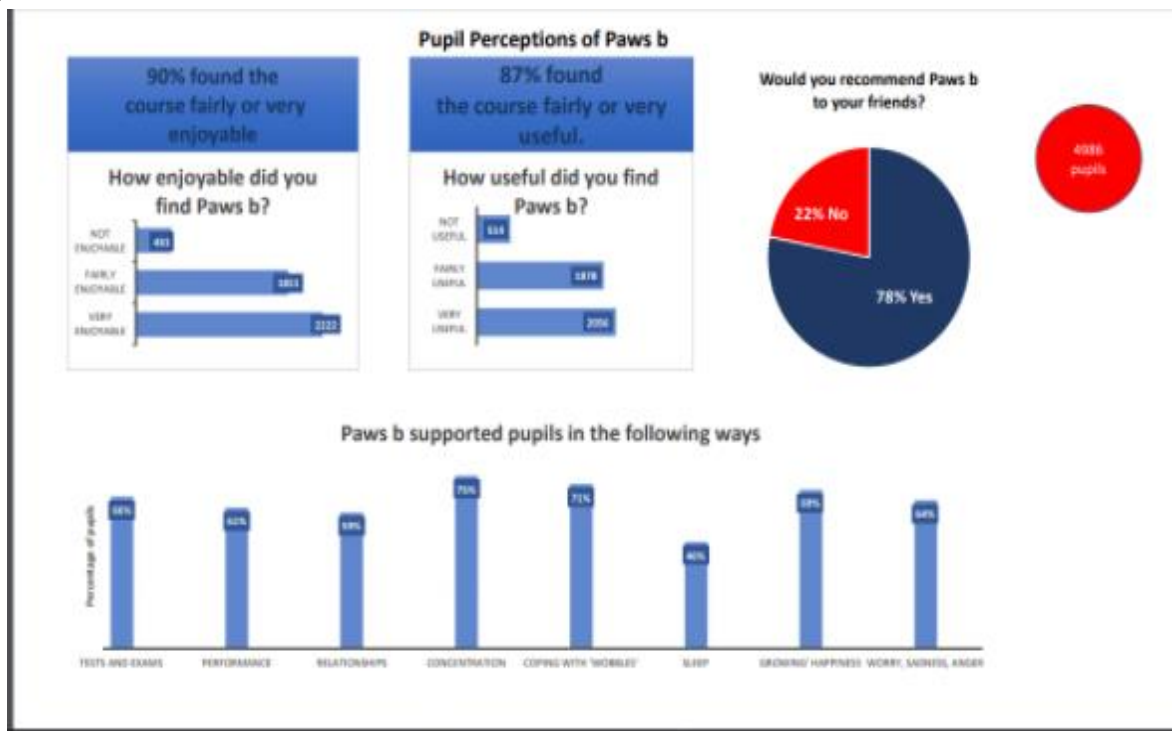
Teacher's that have used this service have rated it as an “extremely useful” way to monitor their teaching and demonstrate outcomes to senior leadership teams, parents and the pupils themselves. You can then reference the impact for your class against the national averages.”

Mindfulness In Schools Project – Class Impact

The information and data received can then be fed back to the Senior Leadership Team and governors, as evidence of the impact of teaching mindfulness to children, and shared with the rest of the teaching staff. These figures could then help to provide an overall picture of pupil well-being within the school.

Figure 1 shows an example of data retrieved from a Class Impact survey.

Figure 1



It will be possible to generate similar data from the completion of surveys done by children following the last lesson of the course. We will also be able to see whether a relationship is developing between children being taught these lessons and individual behaviours and attitudes towards work.

Equal Opportunities

At Lancasterian Primary School, we believe that all children, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, special educational needs, disability or ability, social, cultural and religious background and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds must have equal access to the National Curriculum.

Practitioners aim to ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued, promoting self-confidence and a positive attitude in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

In order to meet children's diverse needs, and help children make the best possible progress, practitioners will:

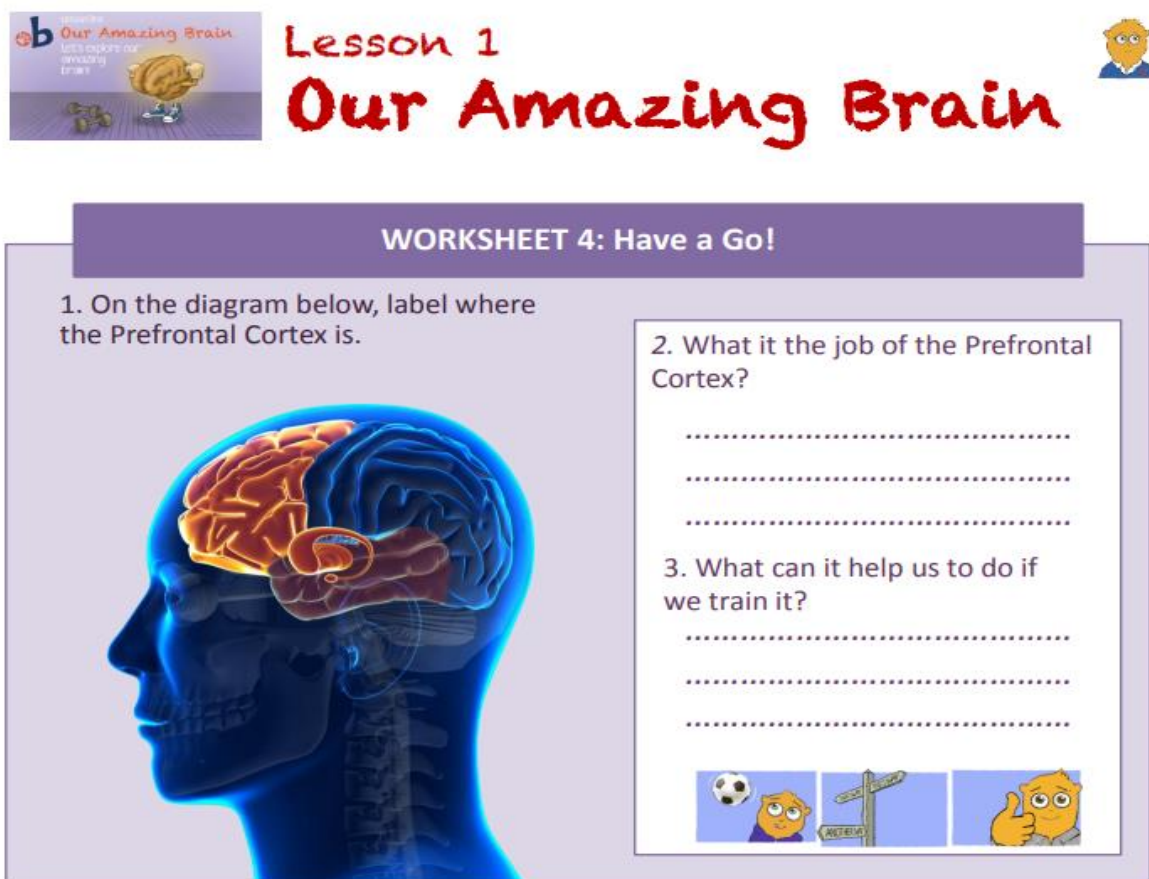
- Plan opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills, developing their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn.
- Use a wide range of teaching strategies, based on children's learning needs.
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Teachers have timetabled a 15 minute Mindfulness session within their weekly timetable. Learning walks will take place by our Mindfulness Lead to ensure that teachers are using that specified time to lead Mindfulness activities. With further training, teachers will need to include and dedicate half an hour a week in order to teach the Paws.b curriculum. Lessons will be evidenced by the completion of differentiated worksheets or photo-based evidence (for children who cannot access the work). This progress will be monitored by the Mindfulness Lead, evidenced in foundation subject books and reviewed termly.

Figure 2 shows an example of one of the differentiated worksheets children can complete in response to being taught 'Our Amazing Brain'.

Figure 2




The image shows a worksheet titled "Lesson 1 Our Amazing Brain". At the top left is a small graphic with a brain icon and the text "Our Amazing Brain". To the right of this is the title "Lesson 1 Our Amazing Brain" in large red letters, with a small cartoon character icon to the right. Below the title is a purple header box containing the text "WORKSHEET 4: Have a Go!". The main content area contains three questions. Question 1 asks to label the Prefrontal Cortex on a diagram of a human brain. Question 2 asks for the job of the Prefrontal Cortex, followed by three dotted lines for an answer. Question 3 asks what it helps us to do if we train it, followed by three dotted lines for an answer. At the bottom right of the worksheet are three small icons: a soccer ball, a cartoon character, and a cartoon character giving a thumbs up.

Lesson 1
Our Amazing Brain

WORKSHEET 4: Have a Go!

1. On the diagram below, label where the Prefrontal Cortex is.



2. What is the job of the Prefrontal Cortex?

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3. What can it help us to do if we train it?

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