

# Improving attention and focus of P7 pupils through the use of mindfulness in class

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**Rationale:** Former pupils from Hayshead Primary have reported that the transition from P7 to S1 is a stressful time, making it difficult for them to maintain their focus and attention in either setting. 71% of children expressed negative feelings about their transition. We feel that teaching pupils Mindfulness strategies to improve their attention and focus will help them to better cope with the challenge of transition.

**Aim:** All target pupils will improve in teacher and self-reported attention and focus by June 2020

## Method

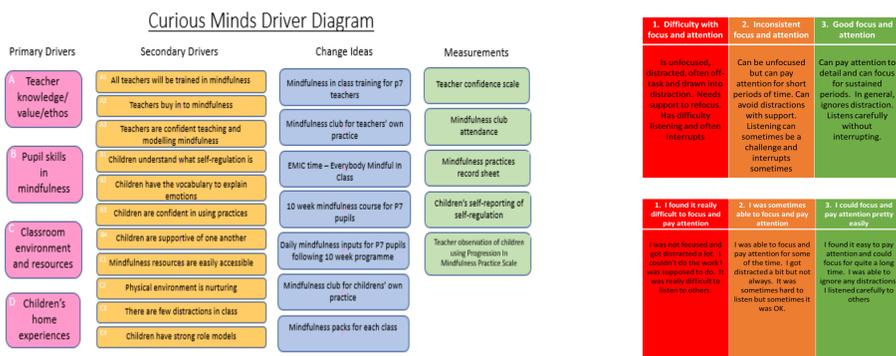
We ran a 4-week bespoke mindfulness training programme (Mindful Learning. Mindful Teaching) for all teaching staff. Teachers were taught the foundations of mindfulness and how to deliver practices. Alongside this we ran a 10-week programme of mindfulness for children in class time.

Teachers were asked to use the practices daily in class and record which ones they used.

We chose 2 of the 3 P7 classes and invited 6 children in each class to participate in our project. We gained consent from them and their parents or carers and asked the pupils and teachers to report on their attention and focus each day using a simple traffic-lighting scale we developed. This was done over 18 weeks.

We changed our focus to one P7 class soon into the project as there was too much data to manage.

## Process Change

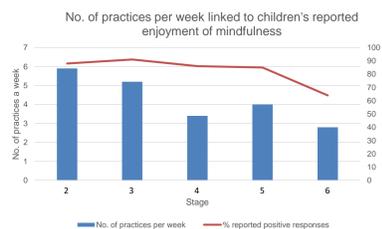


1. Difficulty with focus and attention	2. Inconsistent focus and attention	3. Good focus and attention
Is unfocused, distracted, often off-task and down time distraction. Needs support to refocus. Has difficulty listening and often interrupts.	Can be unfocused but can pay attention for short periods of time. Can avoid distractions with support. Listening can sometimes be a challenge and interrupts sometimes.	Can pay attention to detail and can focus for sustained periods. In general, ignores distraction. Listens carefully without interrupting.
1. I found it really difficult to focus and pay attention.	2. I was sometimes able to focus and pay attention.	3. I could focus and pay attention pretty easily.
I was not focused and got distracted a lot. I couldn't do the work we were supposed to do. It was really difficult to listen sometimes.	I was able to focus and pay attention for some of the time. I got distracted a bit but not always. It was sometimes hard to listen but sometimes it was OK.	I found it easy to pay attention and could focus for quite a long time. I was able to ignore any distractions. I listened carefully to others.

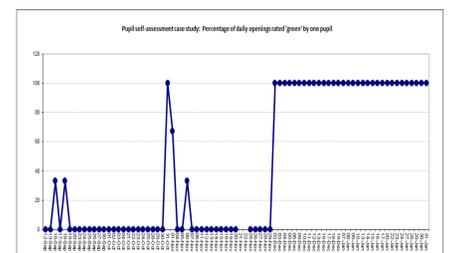
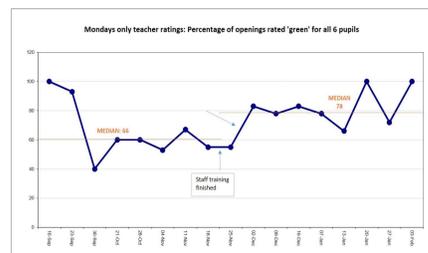
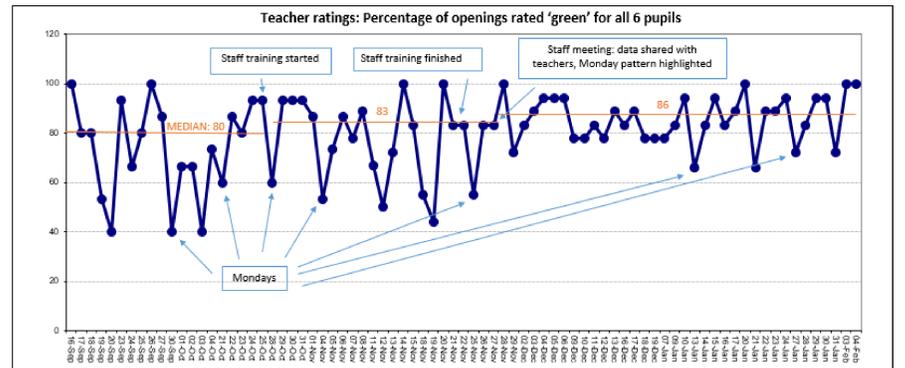
We developed two corresponding traffic light systems, one for teachers and one for pupils based on the desired mindful behaviours we were going to measure for focus and attention. The outcomes and success criteria were shared with pupils and teachers and their understanding was checked before beginning the data recording process.

## Achievements

- All teaching and nursery staff have been upskilled in their understanding and delivery of Mindfulness.
- Classes across the school have delivered significantly more Mindfulness practices in the classroom.
- Children across the school are reporting the use of Mindfulness as a strategy for focus and attention as well as self-regulation.
- Children and adults in the school are becoming more fluent in the use of Mindfulness vocabulary.
- Particularly strong uptake and positivity surrounding Mindfulness in the early years.



## Results



Due to volume of data we are showing a graph for one pupil. This is representative of the other pupils, who tended to rate themselves all green or all amber or red for several days.

## Conclusions

Mindfulness is having a positive impact on our P7 children.

Our results show that **all** target children's focus and attention, as reported by the teacher and the children themselves, improved since introducing a regular programme of Mindfulness.

One third of all P7 students reported using Mindfulness techniques out with school. It is hoped that this skill can be used to help them with their transition to Arbroath Academy.



## Scale / Spread

We would look to:

- Continue providing the Dotb programme for P7's in order to improve their transition to Arbroath Academy.
- Pilot S1 Dotb with pupils from 4 other cluster primary schools with a view to continuing this in 2020/21.
- Develop Mindfulness practices with all S2 pupils.
- Target the infant stages for future quality improvement work in this area due to the strong uptake and positive response.
- Introduce children to this Mindful approach in the early years to provide a strong foundation for them to build on as they progress through the school.

## Key Learning Points

Collecting data from 2 classes was too much. Next time we will keep the amount of data manageable and review regularly in order to create the next PDSA cycle.

Training improved staff confidence overall but the most successful results came from the most engaged teachers. Next time we will work with early adopters where possible and use them to encourage others along with them.

Teacher and pupil subjective observations may not be consistent or reliable. In future we would look at more robust measures to go along with these.