

Case Study - Ewhurst CE Infant

Project Title:

To improve the provision of Personal, social and emotional development along with embedding a growth mindset philosophy throughout our creative curriculum.

Healthy Schools Theme:

PSED and emotional well-being.

School Context:

Ewhurst is a one form entry church of England Infant School situated in the village community of Ewhurst. Ewhurst is a smaller than average infant school with 75 pupils currently on roll serving largely a rural community of the surrounding villages including Cranleigh. The school provides an independently run breakfast club and an extremely popular after school club (Explorers) to meet the needs of the parent profile currently attending the school. Admissions to the school are frequently dependent on the birth rate locally.

There is one class per year group.

Attainment: In 2018 GLD was 85.7% in EYFS. Year 1 phonics screening check was 88.9%. KS1 Attainment is significantly higher than surrey and national data.

Identified Priority:

As a school we established a 'Toolkit for Learning' in 2006 using Guy Claxton's Building Learning Power approach. This strategy, along with 'Assessment for Learning' initiatives was influential in developing young children to become actively involved with their own learning which has contributed to raising attainment end of KS1. In 2012 we updated our Christian values which included 'perseverance' which was a direct outcome of the Learning Tool. As a school we were focused on instilling perseverance as an important factor to becoming a successful learner. So much effective modelling of language for learning was now embedded across the school, but as a community we were becoming more aware of a rise in anxiety in young children. This was being evidenced in entry data 2015 into the EYFS with low areas of PSED (eg over 30% of cohort having low self-confidence). Characteristics of Learning observations indicated poor resilience in this cohort. The new primary national curriculum was introduced in September 2014 and new end of KS1 assessments in 2016. A rise in anxiety amongst some of the parental body, often through the media was observed. As a teaching staff we attended an Educational Conference at Wellington College in June 2016 and the Headteacher listened to the key note speaker, Matthew Syed, sports journalist and author. His research into sports stars and their journey to success through having a 'growth mindset' resonated with our school context. As a result we undertook further research into growth and fixed mindsets using his experience (Black Box Thinking) and that of Carol Dweck (mindset).

In December 2016 we invited Ben Stevenson from Boxgrove Primary School to discuss further how to develop a growth mindset attitude to learning.

In September 2017 the key note presentation given by the headteacher to the whole school staff team at Inset was 'To achieve highly; through a love of learning, a creative curriculum and a growth mindset philosophy'. Early in the autumn term a baseline questionnaire was circulated to children, parents, staff & governors to gather measurable data. The philosophy was shared over the year with parents and governors and explored through a parent workshop, newsletters and at a presentation to governors.

Outcomes:

Growth Mindset School Comparative data September 2017 & July 2018 (see attached)

Highlights include:

'If I practice I will get better' increase by 35%

'I can always improve, so I'll keep trying' increase by 23%

'I love challenges' increase by 20%

'I don't like it when I get things wrong' a change by 14%

September 2017 PSED baseline for EYFS

14% self-confidence not expected to achieve GLD

25.2% managing feels and behaviour not expected to achieve GLD

21.6% making relationship concerns not expected to achieve GLD

By July 2018 only 3.6% didn't achieve a GLD

Leuvens scale (a scale of well-being & involvement) - 4 chn highlighted with a low score in 2017

Interventions ELSA, parental conversation and peer to peer support, circle time focus on friendship and strategies developed to manage feelings & behaviour. All achieved a GLD.

Characteristics of learning observations on 6 children in each year group.

Year R- September – July 2018 all chn had increased perseverance with a task and were readily trying different approaches if first idea didn't work out.

Year 1- September - July 2018 all chn able to persevere for longer and problem solve and also accepted the activity as a challenge.

Year 2- September- July 2018. The willingness to seek a challenge improved with all children across other areas of learning. 1 child's ability to approach a challenge where he knew he might fail' improved so much that he was confident to offer support to other children.

Activities / Interventions:

- Revised PSHE plans for each year group so now include Growth Mindset and critical thinking lesson (Oct '17)
- Baseline questionnaire for growth mindset to whole school community (Oct '17)
- Curriculum evening for parents (Jan '18) with a growth mindset workshop.
- Feeling good Week (July '18) with a growth mindset focus.
- Presentation to governing body 'Our Creative Curriculum' (June 21st 2018) which expanded on the impact of prioritising approaches to develop life-long learners in our cross curricular approach
- Leuvens Scale analysis for EYFS- pupils targeted for characteristics of learning observations through the year.
- Index for Inclusion project 'Encouraging children to be confident critical thinkers'.
- Good Morning Challenge in year 2 eg 'Would you rather win every cricket match playing in the rain, or lose every cricket match in the sunshine? Discuss.
- As a church school living our school values of love, respect, honesty, friendship, community & perseverance.
- Whole community embracing a growth mindset philosophy.
- SDP focus from September 2017.

Impact:

- PSHE planning provides focussed sessions on developing a growth mindset and as a result increased in sustained time focus on a learning activity. Our year 2 teacher gave an example of one boy who, at the beginning of the year, had a fixed mindset and would only approach a task his own individual way. By July he was saying to a peer 'don't worry, keep going, if you like I could help you?'
- A child in Yr R used as a role model from the Bear Gryll's programme that those people never give up and I'm going to work really hard to build up my muscles so that I can do the big zip wire that my sister does'.
- Critical thinking opportunities enabling year 2 children to ask big questions and debate questions such as 'What would happen if it was always winter?' 'Why'. The impact is highlighted in the report attached following the completion of the Index for Inclusion focus

- Focusing further on 'Characteristic of Learning' for all children and as result all staff are now becoming more aware of the child's attitude to learning. Staff work closely with parents to encourage a growth mindset whilst providing opportunities in the class for 'next steps' using an assessment grid for characteristics of learning.
- Questionnaire results as seen in 'Outcomes' section are powerful in recognising the whole school community increasing a growth mindset culture.
- Staff professionally incorporating a language of growth mindset model their own learning through mistakes; ask questions such as 'How have you challenged yourself today?', 'Can you tell me which part you found tricky and what did you do?' and use statements such as 'When we make mistakes we learn'.
- The vocabulary of 'Marvellous mistakes' is used by staff from Yr R, parents and children to describe that we learn through our mistakes.
- Whole school culture of praise was reviewed- now staff reward effort and acknowledge the effort taken as opposed to a 'well done' statement. This is reflected in our weekly celebration assemblies.
- Curriculum evening for parents; some revised the way they praised their children taking the school's approach to reward effort rather than saying 'you are the best!' or 'excellent' but recognising hard work and that, for example it takes a long time to learn to read or secure number concepts.
- Reviewed our 'Toolkit for Learning' cards (based on Guy Claxton's Building Learning Power') to reflect the skills we promote to enable pupils to leave as independent learners. Our whole school growth mindset philosophy is a key factor to this.

Next Steps:

- September year group curriculum meeting included growth mindset as an attitude to learning.
- Termly parent consultation meetings adapted to focus on an individual's attitude to learning using growth mindset activities and approaches.
- Parental 'working alongside' opportunities in school actively promote/demonstrate in the class setting the importance of how young children learn and how to encourage a growth mindset through our vocabulary.
- EYFS annual report will start with a child's 'Characteristics of Learning' in July 2019 rather reporting on them at the end.
- Physical Activity focus in SDP to be included more discreetly in the curriculum so young children are undertaking active learning rather than sitting at a table for long periods of time. We are a physically active school and have achieved a KS1 'one star mark' in recognition of promoting sporting activities in 2017-8.
- To pledge to be physically active (PALLS) in travelling to school- a 'platinum' boot challenge to begin in January 2019

Quotes:

Senior Leader quote

"It was fantastic watching the children's confidence grow last year in Cherry Class and the fear of making mistakes melt away. Even with the increased expectation of the year two curriculum the children relished the opportunity to be given a "challenge" and would seek them out regularly".

Parent/governor quote

"My two children (7&5) attend Ewhurst CofE Infant School. As I talk to Mums from other schools, I realise how much of a focus our school has on building growth mindsets, and how important this focus is.

Growth mindset language is used from day one in Reception, and is built on in each of the subsequent classes, and so gets embedded into the way the kids think and learn.

In addition, and key to really supporting this approach, parents are briefed on the concept of a growth mindset, and helped to recognise, through curriculum evenings, how they can change their own mindsets and encourage their children's development too. This isn't just a one off event, but something that is reiterated in communications to parents, such as the recent Reception class "41 ways to say well done", and even in key documents such as the "behaviour and anti-bullying policy booklet" (section on "top tips for promoting positive behaviour")

The focus on growth mindset has resulted in my kids being very open to trying new things, to not being afraid of their approaches not working, and to understanding that trying hard is key to making progress. My kids know that if they can't do something, it's not the end - they just can't do it yet. I've become very aware of how my mindset has been more closed in the past, and how I've been able to make a shift towards a more growth mindset - both in everyday life, and also as a parent. I've also bought my nephew a book about it, to help him think more positively about what he can achieve! I really do believe this approach is key to mental resilience and therefore crucial for young children. I believe that the focus our school puts on this from such a young age (and with parents) will I'm sure be life changing."