



## Barrow Hedgelines

### *Creativity Week Special Edition*

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June was our annual Creativity Week and this year this was entitled 'This is Me'.

We celebrated how we are all unique and special in our own way. The learning that took place supported children to develop positive mental health and to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be in charge of their own well-being.

The Guardian newspaper reports, *"Statistics tell us that one in four people in the UK will experience a mental illness each year. We all have a brain and, therefore, a mental health. By sharing simple tips which improve self-esteem, promote positive body image, reduce stress and nurture the well-being of our minds we can look after our mental health."*

With mental health problems rising in the classroom we thought that it was an ideal time to have a dedicated focus on well-being, beyond that which we do on a daily basis. There is a wealth of evidence to show that supporting emotional well-being, having an open and honest dialogue and a positive self-esteem, exercise and mindfulness we can greatly improve our children's mental health.

### **Elmer the Elephant (By Nursery)**

The Nursery children read lots of stories about Elmer the patchwork elephant. We looked at all of the different colours Elmer has and related them to our different feelings. We

dressed in different colours and thought about what makes us feel happy (yellow) and calm (green) and how we can ask for help when we feel sad (blue) or angry (red).

We drew pictures of what makes us happy onto a square of fabric and sewed them all together into a patchwork quilt. We also made our own Elmer cushions, using different fabrics and thinking about how Elmer has lots of different feelings, just like we do.



On Friday we learnt about feeling excited. We took our patchwork quilt onto the field and had an 'Elmer Party Picnic' together. It was a very happy and exciting day.



## Feeling Jars (By Reception)

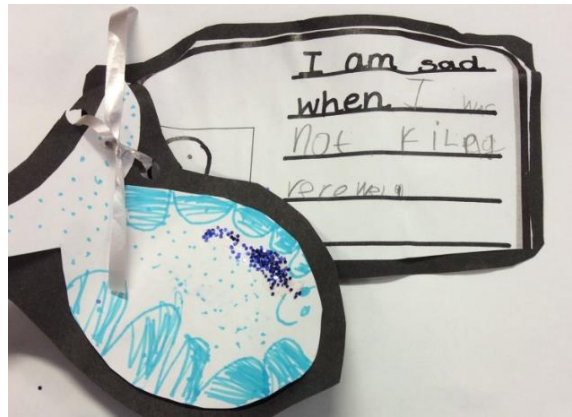


The children have been learning to look after their mental health. The children know that they can keep their brains and their hearts healthy by looking after their feelings.

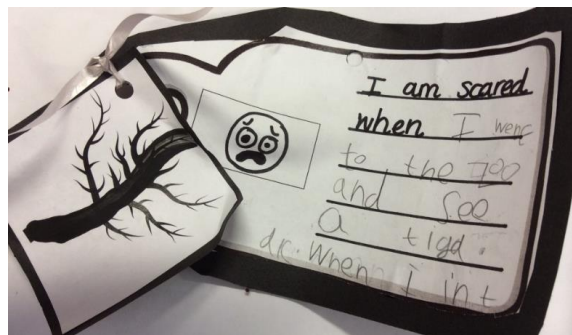
We read the book 'The Colour Monster'. Colour Monster's feelings were all mixed up so he sorted his feelings into jars. We made our own Feeling Jars and sorted our feelings too.



The children danced to happy music and thought about what makes them happy. Happiness is yellow, the colour of sunshine. The children listened to stories about being sad like 'Dogger'. They thought about what makes them feel sad. Sad is blue, like raindrops and tears.



The children listened to the story of 'The Bear under the Stairs'. In the story William feels fear. The children then took part in a philosophy circle talking about being scared and the importance of bravery. Fear is black, like bare trees blowing in a storm.



Finally the children experienced Tai Chi and thought about what it is to be calm. Calm is green, like leaves and trees.



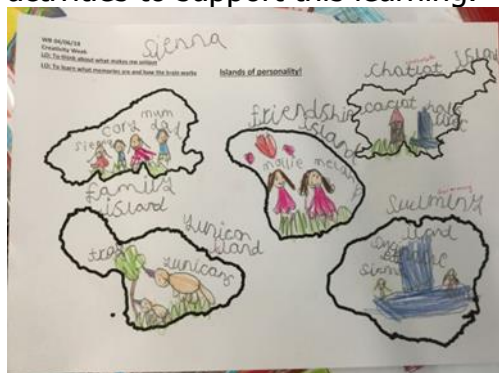
The children took part in a range of therapeutic activities throughout the week. They made sensory bottles and worry boxes.



## Learning about Emotions (By Year 1)

In Year 1 the children have been learning about the five main emotions and how to deal with their emotions appropriately.

The children took part in a variety of activities to support this learning.



We have been learning about memories and how the brain works. We had lots of fun thinking about our own memories and the emotions that are attached to them. We thought carefully about what makes us unique and designed our own 'Islands of Personality'.



We made puppets to look like the characters in 'Inside Out'. We then used them to talk different emotions and how we dealt with them.



Mandalas are used as symbols for meditation, protection and healing. We enjoyed designing and making our own!



Miss MacDonald (a visitor to the school) told us that shields held meanings for people in the past. We decorated ours with things that are important to us.



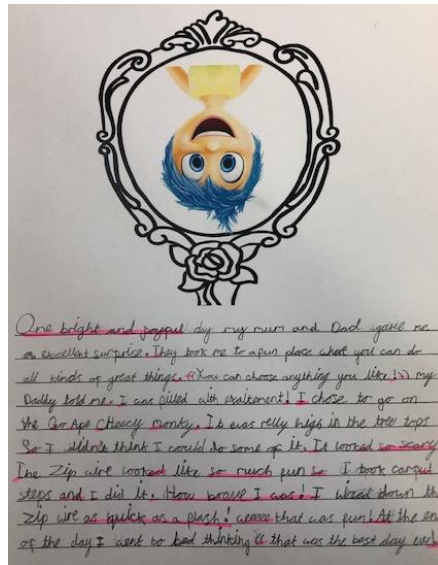
We know that we are unique and enjoy different hobbies. Some of these hobbies can be relaxing and help us stay calm. We had fun decorating biscuits to look like 'Joy' from the film 'Inside Out'.



Ian ( a regular visitor to the school) came to visit to lead a mindfulness philosophy circle. We explored our emotions and reflected on different situations.

### **Who am I and What Makes Me Special? (By Year 2)**

Year 2 started our week by thinking about how we look after ourselves. We know that we need to keep our bodies healthy by brushing our teeth, staying active and having enough sleep but sometimes we forget that we need to take care of our mental health too. We thought about what 'mental health' means and did a lot of talking about our emotions. We talked about negative feelings, for example anxiety, anger or sadness, and how it is completely normal to feel this way every once in a while. We talked about the things we can do to try to stay positive or who we can talk to about how we feel. We thought about what the different emotions can be linked to. We thought about what the feelings look and feel like and shared times where we've felt them. We wrote recounts about these occasions.



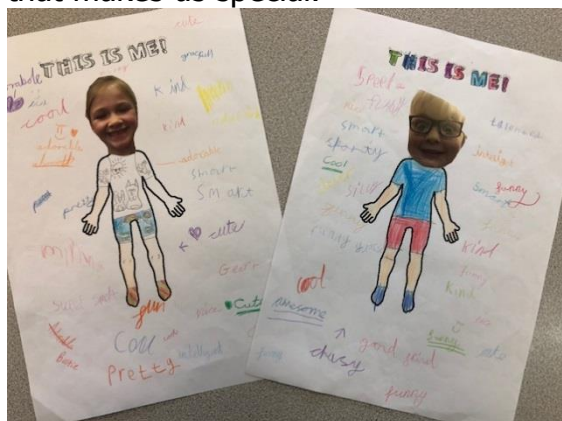
*By Laney May (Robin Class)*

We also spent a lot of time thinking about gender stereotypes. Adrian, from Big Foot Theatre Arts, came in to work with us and we had so much fun. First, we had an assembly where Adrian talked about the things that make us great. We also talked about how sometimes people can think that only boys can be strong and girls can be caring but this definitely is not the case. We thought about what we want to be when we grow up and how nobody can put us in a box; girls can join the army and boys can become nurses. Year 2 were so lucky because we then spent the rest of the day with Adrian exploring who we are and why we are special. We used drama to explore this, making still figures of the characteristics that make us unique.



Finally, we helped our friends realise who they truly are and what we think makes them special. We took selfies

and passed our faces around asking our friends to write down something that makes us special.



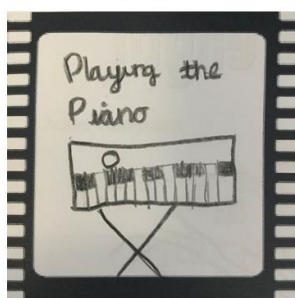
## We are All Wonderful People (By Year 3)

This week we have been learning about our mental health which is all about our thoughts and feelings. Sometimes people have happy, comfortable thoughts and feelings. Sometimes, people have thoughts and feelings that don't feel so good and might feel upsetting or uncomfortable.

All these things make me happy:



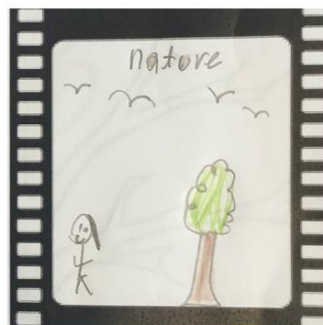
I feel happy when I'm ...



Something important that we have learned is that mental health is about what is on the inside not the outside. Even though someone might look

happy on the outside, they might actually be feeling sad on the inside so it is important to try to make everybody feel special.

I am happy when I'm near ...



We are all different and we need to celebrate differences. We look different, but more importantly, we are all different on the inside. If we were all the same, life would be very boring! Everyone is special because we have different qualities and are good at different things. Some of us are creative, some of us are kind, some of us are brave, some of us are caring. We also like to do different things to make us feel happy. If you are feeling sad, think about the things that make you happy. During Creativity Week, we thought about the things that make *us* happy and made PowerPoint presentations about this.

I will be happy when I'm ...



## We are Unique (By Year 4)

In Year 4, we focused on a different aspect of mental health for each day of the week. On Monday, our focus was



'This Is Me', where we learned all about ourselves and how each and every one is different and special in unique ways. We created some fun art work to showcase ourselves.

On Tuesday, our focus was all around stress. We learned about what stress is, how it feels and discovered ways of dealing with and conquering stress. We were extremely lucky to be visited by two beautiful and very gentle dogs, Flo and Elsa, who were from a very special charity called Pets as Therapy. We got to play with them, and it made us all feel really happy!



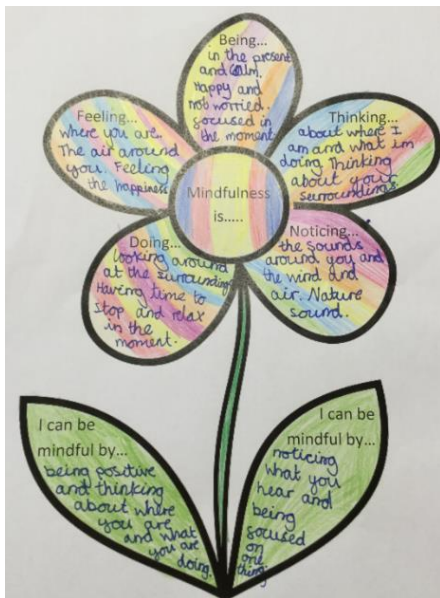
We also got to make our own stress balls, which was not only really fun but also very therapeutic! Throughout the day, we took part in lots of mindfulness activities such as yoga, art and listening to tranquil music; they all made us feel very relaxed!



Later in the week, we attended a very inspiring workshop from Adrian. It was lots of fun and we learned lots about gender stereotyping. We then went back to our classrooms and created some art work which challenged gender stereotypes.

### **How to Look After Me (By Year 5)**

Year 5 had a very exciting week during Creativity Week and learnt all about mental health and how to look after their own minds. We focused on what mindfulness is and really enjoyed exploring the many different ways of becoming mindful. We also discussed what can happen when we don't look after our mental health and why it is so important to ensure our minds are healthy.



## Yoga

In yoga, we removed our worries from our minds and then concentrated on our surroundings helping us forget the troubles of the past and worries of the future. We adopted various different positions and felt how our bodies were.

## Breathing

Breathing is a helpful exercise that creates a clear mind set, so you don't have to. We concentrated on how deep we were breathing and how it made us feel.



## Mindfulness Jars – A Swirling Sensation!

We created mindfulness jars which represented a busy mind compared to a still mind. We used one jar, water, food colouring and glitter to make these fascinating jars – you could even try this at home!

## Colouring

Colouring helped us to focus and calm down after a long play, as well as creating beautiful pieces of art. It helped us clear our minds as we were only concentrating on exactly what we were doing at that point in time.

## Looking After our Mental Health (By Year 6)

### Art Attack

In Y6 we did art attack on mental health for Creativity Week. One group did an art attack on the 'teenage brain'. Each colour represented a different emotion: blue- happy; white- sadness; green- memories ; red-anger; pink-worry; black – loneliness. Everyone brought in resources, especially Chestnut class [who did their picture of a face with mixed emotions] as they did it altogether. In conclusion, this showed resourcefulness and collaboration. All of year 6 found it lots of fun and a great opportunity to work with other people.

By Mia Milner and Amelie Shiels





### **Chocolate Mindfulness**

In year 6 we used chocolate as a way to learn how to be mindful. With the piece of chocolate, we kept it in our hand and had to just look at it and think about it and that single piece's history (eg.in the factory). After this we were told to keep it in our mouth but not consume it. Our mouths were literally watering. A few minutes later we were privileged to consume the delectable masterpiece. However, our teeth were not allowed to touch it, which meant we had to suck it. Some of the responses were "This was pure torture!", "I would definitely do it again." and "I'm not sure how I feel about this." Overall, this was considered a worthy and memorable experience.

By Manna Gauri

### **Guided Meditation**

In creativity week, we have been learning about how to be mindful in class. The way we do this is we move all the tables out of the way, sit or lay on the floor in a comfortable position

and listen to the guide (some of us prefer to close our eyes). This can also be done with mindfulness colouring, where we colour in silence and concentrate on filling in the sheet. It helps us to relax and focus our mind on one thing.

By Leila Richards and Emma Shovelton

### **Music Therapy**

In Creativity Week Year 6 had the opportunity to do a short session of music therapy. This is where you de-stress yourself by surrounding yourself with music, as well as playing some with fun instruments: bongos; maracas and other drum-like instruments. We can see why it can help many people, for example people with depression or anxiety. Year 6 loved this experience and had great fun.

By Hattie Huxley and Olivia Prawdzik.

*We all had a wonderful week and feel that we have learnt many skills that will stand us in good stead for the future.*